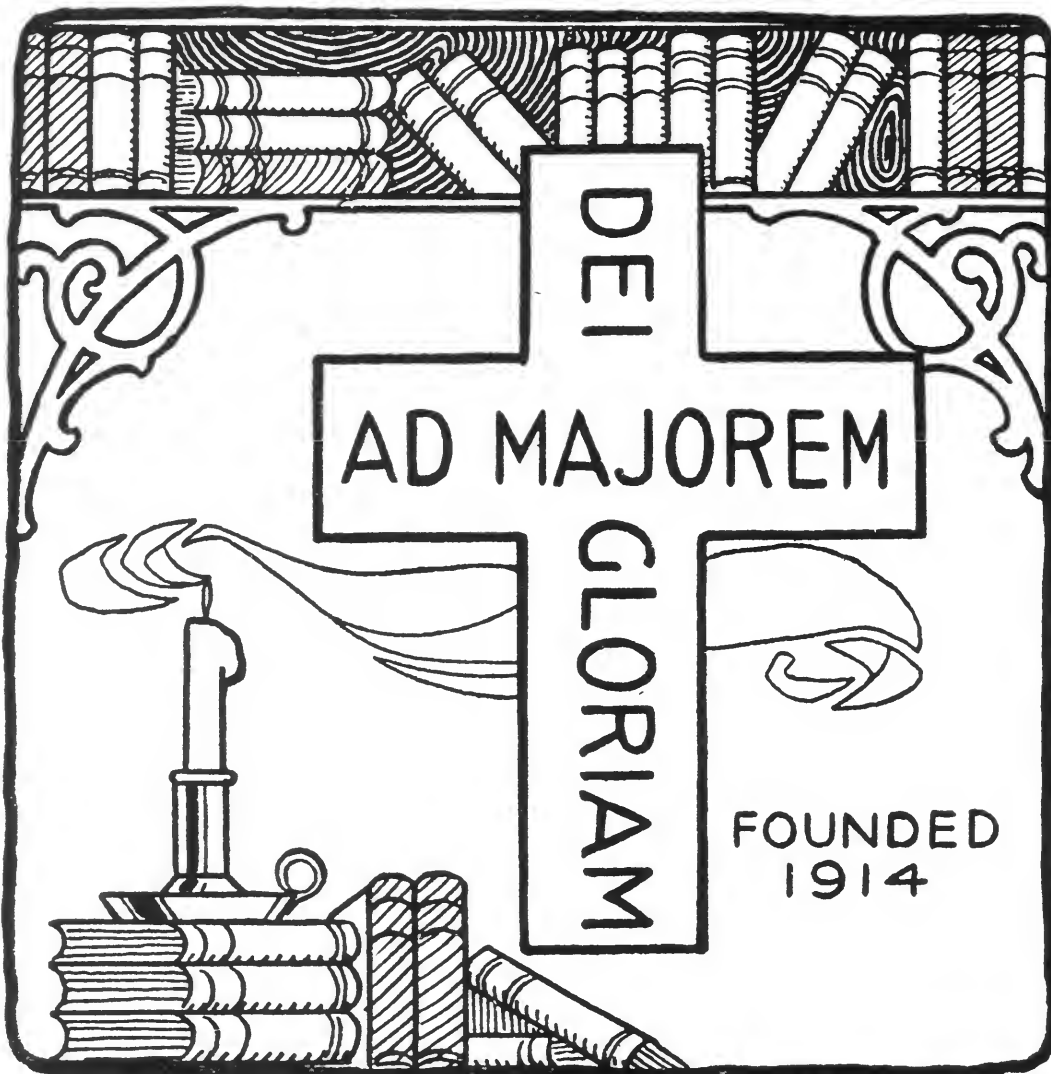


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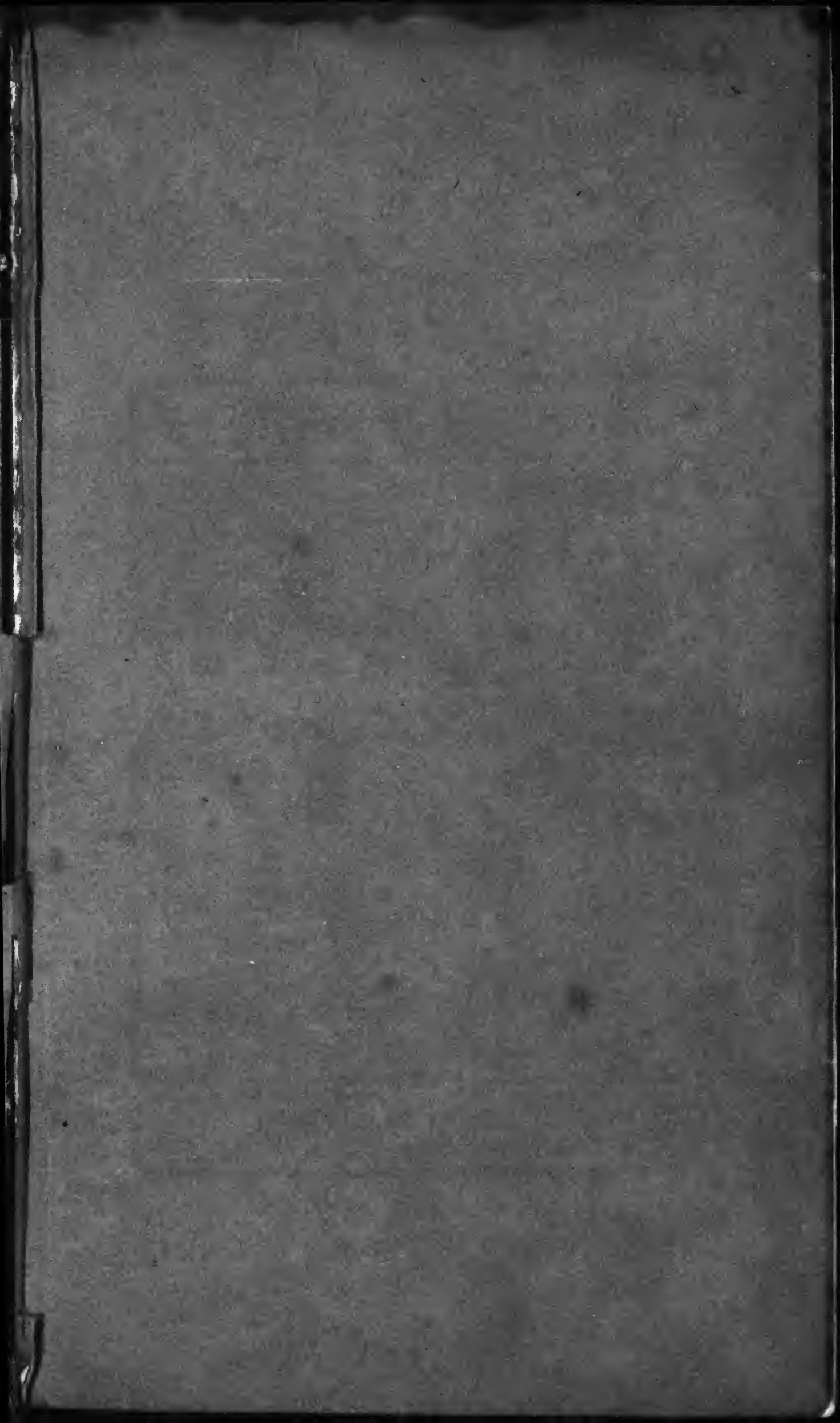


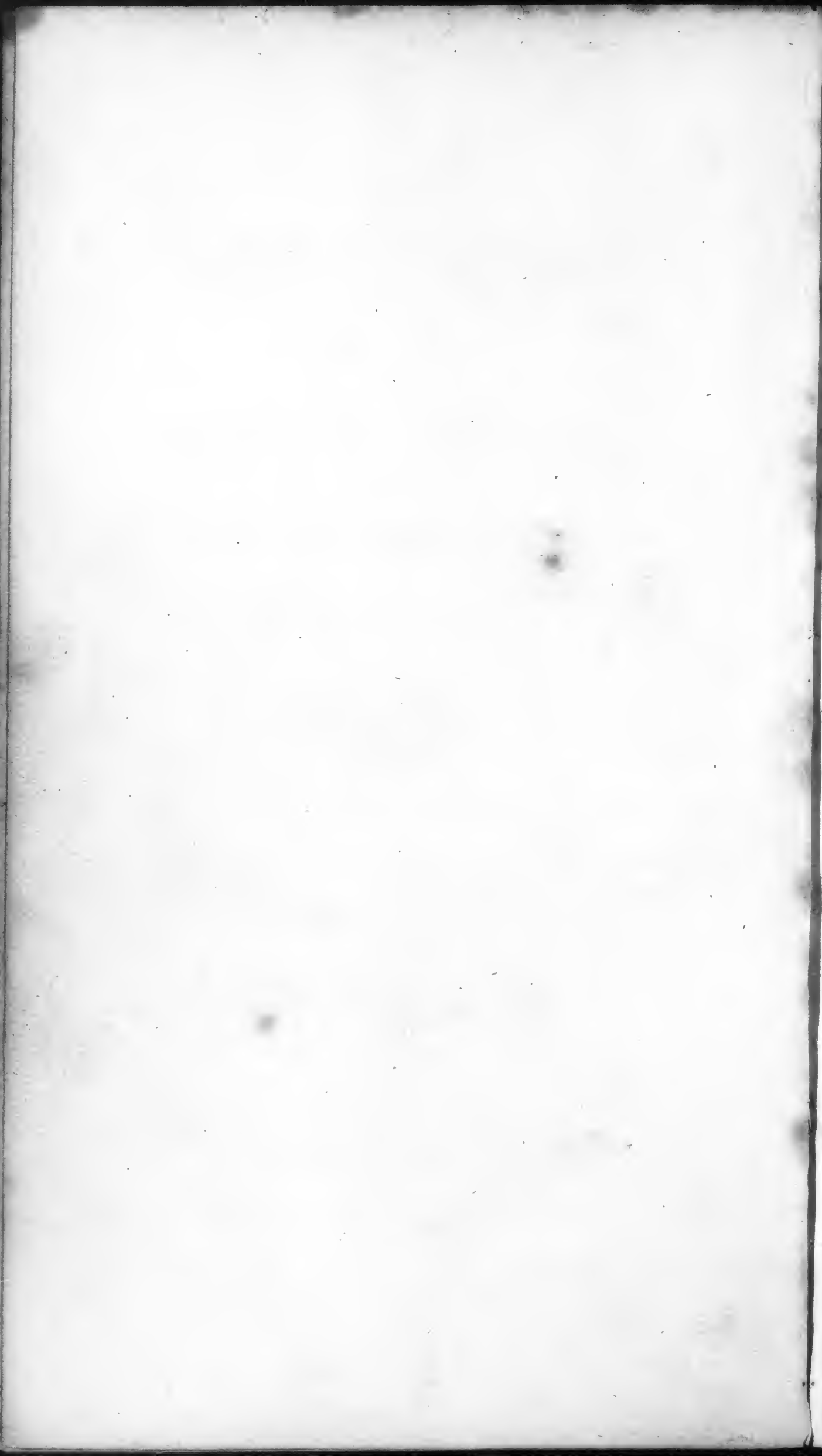
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THE
WALL'S END MINER;
OR A
BRIEF MEMOIR
OF THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM CRISTER;
INCLUDING
An Account of the Catastrophe
OF
JUNE 13, 1835.

BY JAMES EVERETT,
AUTHOR OF
"EDWIN," "THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH," &c.

"Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

ISAIAH.

THE SECOND EDITION.

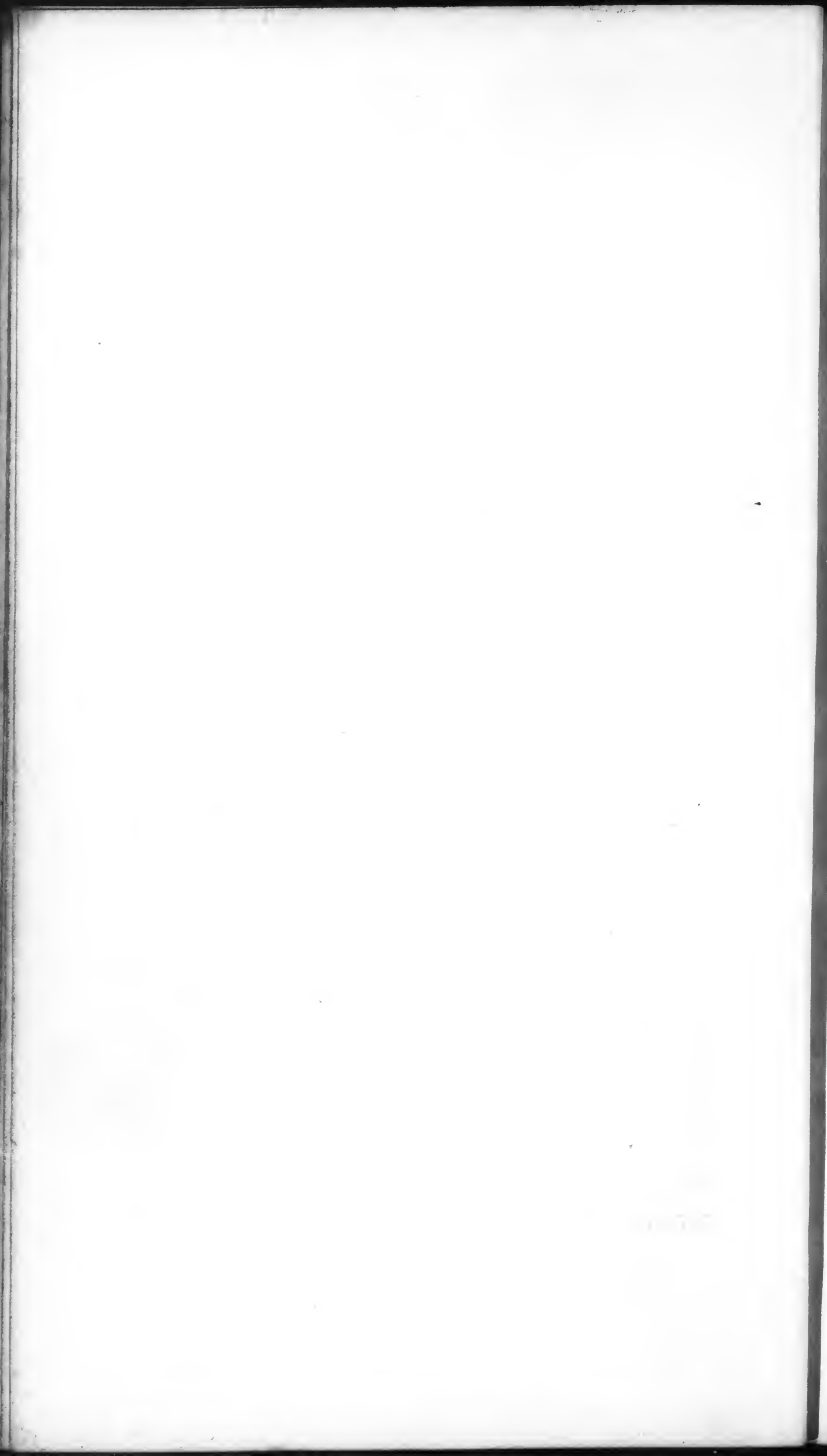
LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.; AND J. MASON,
66, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1838.

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TO
MR. JOHN REAY,
Of Carville, near Newcastle upon Tyne,
A PROMOTER OF RELIGION,
SABBATH SCHOOLS,
AND
CIVIL ORDER,
THIS MEMOIR,
AS A MEMORIAL OF LONG ESTABLISHED
PRIVATE FRIENDSHIP,
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

To persons remote from the scene where the subject of the following pages spent his days, and also unacquainted with its local history, it may be stated, that "WALL'S END" is situated on the North Side of the Tyne, in the County of Northumberland, immediately on the main road leading from Newcastle to Shields, and is about four miles—being an equal distance, from each place. The name is derived from the famous Wall built by the Emperor Severus, A.D. 207, which stretched across the country, passed through the site of the present Town of Newcastle, and here terminated its eastern course. The wall itself was constructed of square stones—was 12 feet high and eight broad--and was every way, except on the edges of precipices, accompanied by a deep ditch or foss. The site of this wall, and the hollow of the foss, running parallel with the present turnpike-way, are

still to be traced from Byker Hill Mill to the first milestone on the Shields road ; and a fragment of the wall itself is still to be seen near the bridge over Denton Burn, a little west of Newcastle.

But apart from Roman history, and independent of any knowledge of its association with the place, the “Wall’s End *coal*” has been long famed for its excellent quality ; so much so, indeed, that coal-dealers have been detected in a fraudulent use of the name in the market,—pushing off, under its sanction, an inferior article. In this excellent mine, the subject of the present Memoir was long employed ; and the products of his toil warmed many a metropolitan hearth, from the cottage to the palace, and from the kitchen to the drawing-room,—his own heart being often heated to intensity with the love of God, while, in the midst of his numerous aspirations to Heaven, the material was passing through his horn-worked hands.

Several objections were presented to the writer’s mind on first taking up the subject ;—objections much more discouraging than

those which operated in the case of “The Village Blacksmith”—a work, the success of which has exceeded any thing he could possibly have anticipated, and for which he expresses his gratitude both at the bar of criticism and to an indulgent public. For though the son of Vulcan was far his inferior in intellect, and might have kept his *forge* at work with the Tyne-Side Miner’s *materials*,—preserving his own native warmth in full vigour, as did “Peter,” in company with “the servants and officers, who had made a fire of coals,” before which they “stood,” and at which “they warmed themselves,” yet he was invested with more associate circumstances, characters, and scenes than his humble follower, on many of which depends a considerable portion of the interest of the narrative. The Miner was too much *localized*, to admit of variety, arising from a change of society and of place ; in a description of which the reader often experiences more enjoyment than the actual spectator. The want of *office*, too, on which public character takes its stand, leading to

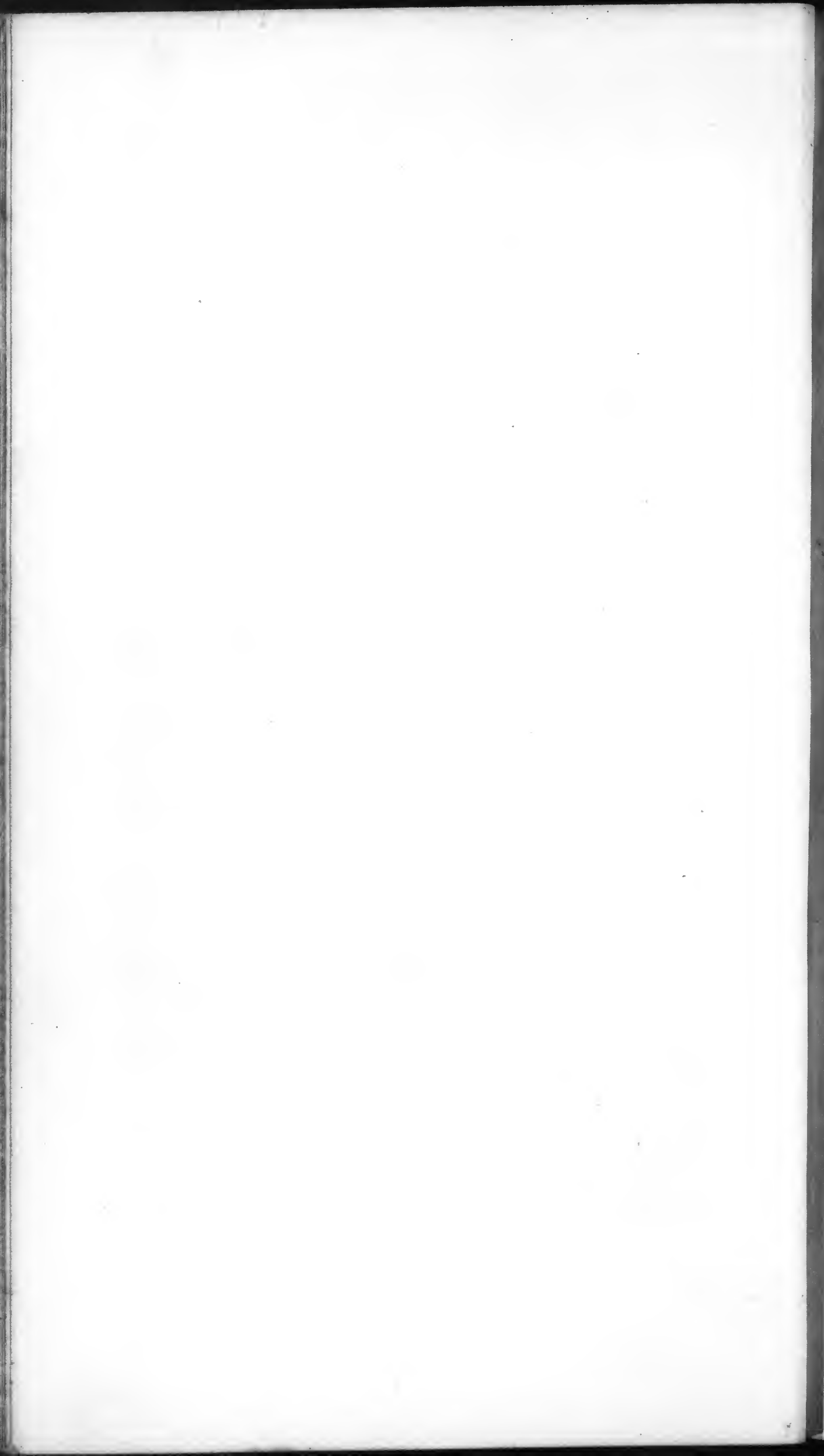
various associations, as well as to intellectual development, was another defect. Hence it was, that the writer saw before him a narrative of *sayings*, rather than of *doings*; and felt a danger of being hemmed within the limits of a bare delineation of *character*, rather than that of having the privilege of expatiating at large over the whole course of a richly-varied *life*.

He recollected, however, that he had a candid and intelligent religious public to deal with,—persons who would look for no more from a Miner, than what the character of his circumstances would admit; who would never look for the refinement of manners from the cottager, which might reasonably be expected from the courtier—for the same knowledge from the uneducated plebeian, as from the man of learning—or who would hope to see a prince in manners, and a Solomon in wisdom—without promise or preparation, starting into existence out of a collier. Taste, perhaps, rather than judgment—as in the case of particular artists, led the writer to decide upon his subject. He always

prefers the thatched cottage in ruin, to the stately villa, trimmed and squared, for pictorial effect; and the rude cascade, to the polished stream. When he laid hold of his subject, he found him an *original* of his *kind*; and an original of *any* kind, whether in prose or verse, in science or mechanics, in the hamlet or in the city, will present some points of interest, which may be considered peculiar, and claimed as personal property. An estate may be fertile, though not large; and a garden will present as many beauties, and create as lively an interest, as a wide monotonous heath, distinguished only for its sterility. Here the candid reader will find a garden—not of flowers barely, but of fruit; and though the inheritor was poor, the crop may be viewed as rich for Heaven. If the writer should have been in error respecting the quality, the judicious reader will be able to detect, as the candid, it is hoped, will be disposed to bear with the mistake.

J. E.

Newcastle, Sep. 17th, 1835.



ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
SECOND EDITION.

HAVING been repeatedly urged to reprint the “*Miner*,” owing to a demand for it from the publishers, the writer has been induced to comply with the request: and to shew, that he is not insensible of the obligations under which he is laid for the public favour bestowed, he has laboured to repay by his industry what he has received in the way of courtesy. The whole of the *Memoir* has undergone a strict revision—considerable additions, including several important facts, not before in the writer’s possession, have been made—and a plan of the workings of the mine, lithographed and introduced. These alterations led to the adoption of the 12mo. instead of the 18mo. size, in which it first

appeared,—leading, of course, in the additional expense, to an augmentation in the price.

The favourable manner in which the work has been received by the public journals, cannot be otherwise than grateful to the writer; and while its general character is affirmed to be good, slight differences of opinion, resolving themselves into mere points of taste or criticism, may be innocently indulged, and the character itself preserved unimpaired. The frequent employment of scriptural texts, and the—perhaps, too frequent use of sacred names by the subject of the memoir, may be distasteful to the general reader. But it should be remembered, that it is the *religious* biography of an illiterate but religious man;—that the biographer, though anxious to improve the world, was not writing for the irreligious part of the community so much as for the *church*;—that it is his opinion that, in many professedly religious works, there is a poverty of scriptural language and imagery, exhibiting a marked distinction between the

moderns and the writers of the puritanic school—thus passing from one extreme to the other ;—and that he always considers himself as standing well, when he can plant his foot on sacred soil—when he can base his positions on eternal truth. He is not inclined to adopt the opinion, that in “ writing to the world, authors should write as the world does as to manner,” and that the “ hallowed language of prayer and praise is not altogether to be used even in a sermon—still less in a biography ;” * for if it be merely as to *manner*, why exclude the *matter* of the sacred text? and if the “ hallowed language of prayer and praise” be not to be used in a *sermon*, or in *religious biography*, where, it may be demanded, is such *language* to be employed? The “ Sermons” of the licentious Lawrence Sterne will meet the views of those who are averse to “ hallowed language” in such compositions; and the “ Memoirs” of the celebrated Percival Stockdale will accommodate their wishes,

* Metropolitan Literary Journal, March, 1836.

as to the total absence of “prayer and praise.”

But as neither of them bear the genuine stamp of Christianity, it is difficult to ascertain of what value either of them are, in educating human beings for a glorious eternity—which is the grand end of Religion and of the ministerial office, which the authors separately sustained. To “write as the world does,” would, it is feared, be to preserve the world as it is—“without God.” Besides, what is it that constitutes the difference between sacred and profane writers, if it be not the sentiment and phraseology?

What is the object of a minister in his SERMON, but to *illustrate* and *apply* the *sacred text*? and what is RELIGIOUS BIOGRAPHY, but a *practical comment* on the *living truths* of the *Bible*? Now, the difficulty is, how either are to be accomplished without the “hallowed language of prayer and praise!” As well might the lives of Alexander, of Copernicus, of Raphael, of Boyle, of Boerhaave, of Hale, of Milton, or of

Mozart, be penned without employing the *language* of the field, the heavens, the pencil, philosophy, law, physic, poetry, or music, as attempt the life of a *Christian* without the language of *Christianity*,--a Christian, whose very breath is "prayer and praise." Each subject requires--to a certain extent at least, its own mode of treatment, and the drapery of language must be in keeping with the subject; the hero with his sword, the artist with his pencil, and the Christian with his Saviour and his Bible--each subject, to be natural, demanding its own appropriate language;—sacred language for sacred things.

In the life of a private character, there may not be much to "interest the general reader." The truth is, as Dr. McCrie remarks in his *Life of Knox*, that there is a "line which divides biography from general history;" and hence, the "general reader" will rarely be satisfied with the biography of a localized, humble individual. But "general readers," compared with the mass of society, are greatly in the minority; and biography, like that of the "*Miner*," is

intended for persons in the more humble walks of life. Not only so, but every human being who carries about with him *man* in himself, will be able to read, in all genuine biography, portions of the history of his *own nature*. Biography is a mirror in which man—as *man*, may recognize the general features of his own face ; or to speak without a metaphor, the feelings of his own *heart*.

J. E.

Newcastle, Dec. 21st, 1837.

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ERRATA.

Page 95, line 9, for *turned*, read *tamed*.

Page 104, line 18, in some copies, insert the word *are* at the end of the line.

Page 208, the figure stating the number killed at Ovington's Pit, East Rainton, is broken off; it should be 2.

THE
WALL'S END MINER, &c.



CHAPTER I.

Providence and Grace—The Birth and Parentage of the Subject of the Memoir—He is left an Orphan—Sent early to the Collieries—Meets with a Pit Accident—His Affection for his Foster-mother—Exemption from gross Immorality—Is playfully mischievous—The Gaiety of his Disposition—Enters a Rifle Corps—Is distinguished in the Band—Invited to a Class-meeting—Conviction—Conversion—Learns to read—Suffers through his Connexion with the Army.

MINERS and MARINERS are among those classes in society, who, in their lawful occupations, are much more exposed to sudden death, in the various perils by which they are surrounded, than others; and it is a fact, in the history of Wesleyan Methodism, which ought not to be overlooked, that God, in infinite mercy, directed the attention of its extraordinary founder, at the earliest period, first to the *colliers* of KINGSWOOD, and next to those on the TYNE and the WEAR,*—taking a stride, so to speak, from one

* See Note B,—Appendix.

extremity of the land to the other,—leaving thickly-populated districts unvisited between,—and thus, to persons in the *greatest danger*, offering the only means of *everlasting safety*. However this feature of Divine Providence may be viewed by others, to a person divinely enlightened, the subject will come with a peculiarly impressive power to the heart; and no one, possessed of genuine Christian philanthropy, but must exult in the more than usual harvest reaped for the garner of God among this death-exposed race of industrious men. The same being who has so often met them in the terrors of his Providence, has, in this instance, met them in the riches of His grace—amply compensating the perils of the one in the blessings of the other.

WILLIAM CRISTER, who was born in the Close, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the county of Northumberland, December 26th, 1779, was a trophy of no ordinary worth, among thousands of others, who graced the triumphs of the Redeemer, while following his steps upon earth. His father was a bass-maker, and had six children in all, of whom William was the youngest. His mother, when he was about eighteen months old, was seized with an illness, which soon terminated in her dissolution; not long after which, his father also died. The mother, during her illness, requested a friend to take care of William; and that friend kindly acceding to the request, removed him to the collieries, where he was brought up in the lowly walks of life.

When in the seventh year of his age, he was sent

to work in the pit at Bigge's Main, about three miles East of Newcastle; and having laboured there the space of four years, the family with whom he resided removed to Wall's End Colliery, in the same neighbourhood, whither he accompanied them, and in which he was employed the remainder of his days. While at Bigge's Main, he had a narrow escape, when at work; for so near was the fire, during the explosion, that it drove some small pieces of coal into his face, the blue marks of which he carried with him to the end of his pilgrimage.

The family, under whose roof he was reared, treated him with great affection, and his orphan-heart clung with equal tenderness and gratitude to his foster-mother. He was advised, when he grew up, to quit the house, by those who ought to have known better, and to appropriate his wages to his own use. But he had too tender a nature cruelly to abandon old age, and too deep a sense of the kindness received, to forget it. When the woman was sick, to whom he had looked up as a mother, he provided whatever was within the range of his power for her comfort, and gave her the whole of his earnings as long as she lived. With this family he continued, till he was about one and twenty years of age, when he entered into the marriage state; remaining from eight to nine years more, an utter stranger to experimental religion.

Previously to his marriage, he was distinguished for a decent morality, for honesty and industry; nor less so, when he was surrounded by a family of his own. He was sportive rather than vicious,—would

have raised the laugh, rather than have produced the tear, by imparting pain,—and would have led the way to harmless amusement, rather than have followed in the wake of crime. As a key to character, it may be stated, that when he found a neighbour's door open, and the house without an inmate, he would have stepped in unperceived, and would have concealed in one of the most unlikely places to look for it, either some article of value, or something likely to be wanted for immediate use; watching the while, for the return of the careless absentee, in order to observe the workings of the mind, to see the first surprise, or fear, and to furnish an opportunity of exercising affected sympathy in the presumed loss. This led to occasional falsehood, which his unenlightened mind placed to the account of innocent mirth. After he had amused himself some time, with demure look, and soft speech, he would then point to the place of concealment—turn upon his heel with a laugh—and leave them as much overjoyed with the discovery, as vexed with his folly,—the persons often sending after him the nearest article they could hurl without serious injury to either. An unoccupied house—though but for a moment, would have been deemed a favourable occasion by the unprincipled for purposes of plunder; but though destitute of the fear of God, Crister was honest to man.

The natural gaiety of his spirit, and benevolence of his disposition, leading him more into the company of the facetious than the facinorous, he was consequently less exposed than many around him, to the effects of profane habits. No society was allowed to

be sad in his presence. Having considerable wit and fancy of his own—being generally on the look out for the droll, quaint, smart sayings of others—and possessing what, in humble life, might be deemed considerable fecundity, he was very often the harlequin of the persons with whom he associated, and was sure to renovate the flagging attention and overworked spirits of any who might be disposed to sink.

One circumstance which contributed not a little to his notoriety in his unrenewed state, was, the establishment of a corps of riflemen, during the continental struggle, of which Mr. Buddle was captain, and in the band of which Crister alternately beat the great drum, and amused himself and others with the tamberine. Though an adept in handling both instruments, yet it was in the use of the latter he particularly excelled; and being exceedingly flexile, active, and varied, in his numerous evolutions,—employing the heel, the toe, the knee, the forehead, the chin, the back part of the head, the shoulder, the elbow, knuckles, and fingers,—passing from one to another, and from one extremity to the other, with the utmost ease, rapidity, and grace, he attracted immense crowds to see his performance. While others delighted the ear with their music, Crister fixed the eye by his antics,—the music itself appearing very often a mere accompaniment to an exhibition, in which he stood as the chief actor. But though extremely partial to music, and almost living in its sound, he was never able to read it. His ear was quick, and good; and he would have caught a tune as expeditiously, and

fixed it nearly as permanently, as a person could have committed it to paper.

William Kennedy, who was anxious to promote the moral and religious welfare of his fellow-creatures, pressed his own brother Thomas, and W. Crister, to accompany him to Mr. Reay's class, which met in the house of the latter, at Carville. They both complied; and though Crister entered the room a perfect stranger to the odiousness and criminality of moral evil, he left it with a deep concern for the salvation of his soul; and continued a member of the class to the day of his death—a period of about twenty-six years, having united himself to it, January 17th, 1809. He had attended preaching at Carville Chapel some time previously to this, and manifested more than usual thoughtfulness, which induced William Kennedy to give him the invitation. But still he remained unscathed in conscience. Here, however, the “scales” fell from his eyes; he beheld himself in “an horrible pit of miry clay;” and what was worse, he found that the bottom of that pit constituted the lid, which opened to the mouth of hell. From thence, he sent up his piercing wailings to heaven, and “the Lord inclined unto” him, “and heard” his “cry.” The “coals of juniper,” remarkable for their intense heat, had entered the soul. Conviction raged like a fire within, and drank up his spirits. His vivacity forsook him; and he wept for very anguish of soul.

His repentance was deep and genuine, but not of long continuance, as to its “weepings and wailings;” for in a few weeks he obtained a clear sense of his

acceptance with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He fixed the eye of his soul upon a crucified Redeemer; by which act he was raised out of the "horrible pit of miry clay," in which he had found himself so deeply plunged,—and which may be illustrated by a dream which a person had, who, like himself, was in search of salvation. The person in question dreamed, according to statement, that he lay at the bottom of a coal-pit, without the least apparent possible way of escape. After remaining in that state some time, he turned his eye up the shaft, called by some "the eye," and saw a small circle of the dark blue heavens. While looking with despondency, and yet wistfully, for some time, a beautiful star appeared, stealing out of the deep azure above,—rendering that azure still more deep, as its own rays became more beautifully bright. This luminary stood directly over him; and one of his first thoughts was—"This is the STAR OF BETHLEHEM." In the act of gazing upon it, with some degree of admiration, he thought he felt its attractive influence, and was by almost imperceptible degrees raised towards the day. By some mishap, he lost sight of it, and fell; and on looking upward again, it had disappeared. He lay, and mourned his wretchedness,—wishing for its reappearance. After a short time had elapsed, it again stole through the gloom, and stood over him as lovely as before. Again he gazed with intensity—again he felt its attractive force—and again he rose. But the eye once more betrayed its trust—and that moment

he fell. His distress was proportionally great; and what seemed to augment it was, he despaired, while in the very act of longing, looking, and watching, of ever again being favoured with a gleam of its rays. It once more, however, refreshed his vision. He looked—he rose—the eye was true—he reached the top—and awoke in an extacy.—Thus it was with Crister. He beheld Jesus, as the Bright, the Morning Star,—as “the Star of Jacob” rising on the darkness of human nature, and shedding His healing beams upon the lost sons of Adam. Faith was represented to him under the notion of attentively viewing an object, and he was accosted in the Bible, with, “Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved.” He was taught, that though the brazen serpent was lifted up, it was only available, in its healing influence, to those who looked upon it. He was taught also, that the *virtue* was not so much in the *serpent*, as in the *look*. Here he was able to perceive a difference between the *type* and the *anti-type*; for he found real virtue in Christ—but still, that virtue only went out of Him, in proportion as he *looked* upon Him with the *eye*, or *laid hold* of Him by the *hand* of faith. He stretched forth his arm, in pursuance of the last figure of speech, as he had often done at the bottom of the shaft, and, empty-handed, laid hold of the mercy of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, as upon a golden chain, and maintained his hold of the last link, till it drew him up to heaven. The Lord, in the expressive language of Elihu, brought “back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living;”

and in the further figurative language of the Psalmist, "set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings." He was now no longer among the "slime pits" in "the vale of Siddim." He had firm footing, and proceeded in his Christian course with stability.

The room in which the class met, was afterwards converted into a shop; and with that room he had many agreeable associations. "I can go," he would say, "to the very spot where the Lord set my soul at liberty. There is a hogshead of *sugar* now standing upon the place:" a reflection to him, much sweeter than the fruit of the cane to the palate, and through which he could look up to heaven with "Abba, Father," dwelling upon his lips, and freedom in his heart. It is a remarkable fact, that some of our best feelings are revived, on our having certain trifling localities brought before the eye. "If an old man," says Foster, "wished to animate for a moment the languid and faded ideas which he retains of his youth, he might walk with his crutch across the green, where he once played with companions who are now probably laid to repose in another spot not far off. An aged saint may meet again some of the affecting ideas of his early piety, in the place where he first thought it happy to pray. A walk in a meadow, the sight of a bank of flowers, perhaps even of some one flower in a landscape with the tints of autumn, the descent into a valley, the brow of a mountain, the house where a friend has been met, or has resided, or has died, have often produced a much more lively recollection of our past feelings, and of the objects and events

which caused them, than the most perfect description could have done ; and we have lingered a considerable time for the pensive luxury of thus resuming the departed state." The sight of the hogshead, which was stationary, reminded Crister years afterwards, what took place when kneeling on the boards beneath it.

Not satisfied with his attempts to pray in public at first, and being deficient in confidence, he laboured to conceive a prayer in his mind, and to preserve it in recollection. This he sought to repeat on different occasions ; but feeling himself trammelled with it, and finding it also injurious to the free spirit of prayer, he laid it aside, and depended upon the spontaneous effusions of the moment : remarking, that he " walked by the aid of a *crutch* at first, but was soon able to go alone."

Being extremely partial to class-meeting, he never, with the exception of *once*, absented himself from church-fellowship, unless lawfully detained. At the time alluded to, he was the subject of strong temptation ; and instead of going to the meeting, he strolled down the banks of the Tyne. He soon felt, that he had *entered into* the temptation ; and after much prayer, he *vowed* before the Lord—a vow which he was able to keep to the day of his death, that he would never more give place to Satan on that subject. " If," said he, when cautioning the absentee in social meetings, " those persons who are in the habit of neglecting their classes only felt what I experienced that night, they would vow, like me, never to do so

again." He was a perfect model for others, in his attention to the public, social, and private worship of God; and as in his class, so among the free sittings in the chapel, he was always to be found in his place, and would have his own seat, with which he was invariably indulged.

One serious inconvenience under which he laboured, was his inability to read. An imperfect knowledge of the *letters* of the English alphabet, was all he had acquired; and in the *thirtieth year* of his age, he had to return to childhood, and was seen anxiously poring over his "Horn Book" and "Tom Thumb," surrounded by his offspring,—looking through these initiatory trifles to the New Testament, and exulting in the hope of one day reaching the fountain of knowledge, and medium of life. By close application, he was soon able to read the sacred page, both in private, and in his family; and to exclaim—"I esteem the words of Thy mouth, more than my necessary food. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than fine gold; sweeter also than the honey, and the honey-comb." In his first readings, he was like a person entering upon a newly-discovered country; he sat down by the skirts or sea-shore of knowledge; but on improving, he entered further and further into

the interior of the land ; till at length, on gaining a small eminence, as it were, he saw the truth of God expanding into a greatness beyond the reach of his own sight, while every thing seemed written as with a sun-beam. The opaque medium was changed for the transparent ; and he beheld with awe, surprise, and admiration, the wonders of God's law. The Bible was to him, not only a "light to the feet and a lamp to the path," but a kind of sacred *Nepenthe*, in every moment of discouragement. There, he found recipes, to employ the language of the medical student, which proved a cordial to his spirits, and imparted vigour to his arm. "I was born twice," he would say ; "once at Newcastle, and another time at Carville. At my second birth, I was as unable to read as at my first ; but now, I can not only read my Bible, but my title to heaven."

While he was making progress in knowledge and in piety, there remained one afflicting drawback to his happiness. The rifle corps in which he had figured for several years, remained in arms upwards of twelve months after his conversion ; and various circumstances and arguments concurred to bind him to the band to which he had been linked. It was a season of scruple and tenderness of conscience ; he was not well grounded in religion ; and his experience and knowledge were ill able to meet the sophisms, temptations, and buffetings, with which he was assailed. The tambarine in the same hand, before and after conversion, seemed altogether another thing ; and the eye

of the public, as quick to perceive as to associate, was upon him for evil, as it had been upon him for good. The instrument had been his idol, and he himself had been the idol of the multitude. Of that idol he was obliged to maintain his hold, when idolatry had ceased; and in the act of handling it, he was not less "ashamed" than the artificer in iron would have been, on receiving a visit from the prophet Isaiah, while forging idols in his smithy, after his enlightenment, and of whom it is said, "the smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms." Poor Crister had to work on, and to throw around his arms for the entertainment of others, while the spirit of his employment was entombed within him. It was not like the graver evolution of the regular soldier, or even the more sober and stately march of a person with the bassoon, or of persons with any other dozen of instruments; but the only article in the band that required a harlequin for its management, and in the hand of one who had once been a master, as he had now become a slave. Being less attached to the exercise of the large drum than the tambarine, he hit upon an expedient once for temporary repose. While engaged with the former, by a dexterously designed blow, he brought one of the sticks in contact with the hoop around the head; it instantly snapped into two parts, and the heavy end flew among the spectators. The trick was repeated a second time, and a second time he accomplished his object. But two new sticks were forth-

coming the next day, the handles of which were formed of whale-bone. These bound him to the drum some time longer, like a whale to the boat, while the harpoon is quivering in its side—imparting as much mental agony to poor Crister as the iron to the fish. He sighed, he groaned, he prayed, he watched, he blushed, till the dissolution of the corps, when he flew off like a bird escaped from the falcon, or an eagle—on being renewed in strength, towards the sun. Though the Divine Being, in his own language—and to keep up the allusion with regard to prophetic times, “created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;” yet He did not create him to make idols, and much less to fall down before them. Crister felt, that though God had endowed him with amazing agility, yet it was not to be employed in that way—either for self-idolization, or for the boast of his friends; and that his position and employment had been the occasion of sin, as it was now the cause of much mental distress.

CHAPTER II.

His Person—His Mind—Natural Character—Opposition at Home—An Apology for his Language and Metaphors—Is partial to Life and Warmth in Religion—Cautionary Remarks on Revivals—His Love of Class-Meeting—Is innocently eccentric—His Method of overcoming Temptation—Humble and familiar Life Comparisons—Takes by Surprise—His Conduct in Social Meetings, in Aid of his Leader—Instances of Quickness and Power of Expression.

THERE was nothing remarkably prepossessing in Crister's general appearance. He was about the middle size—rather slender—and had a little of the pitman's gait, which is not less visible to the eye of an observer than that of a tailor. His complexion was between the brown and the pale, but with a few shades more of the latter than the former, and a slight intermixture of the sallow. The face was inclined to the small and the round—rather a disproportionate width across the cheek bones—partially narrowing above and below—but still not so much as to take away the general character of rotundity—with short, dark, sleek hair. The nose was a little aqueline, the lips rather thin, and the mouth the ordinary size. It was in the eye—dark and sparkling, that the whole of the expression lay, and which showed not only the inner man, but almost continually lit up the countenance with sunshine. It was not large ; and yet, when his

voice conveyed to the ear the conceptions of the mind, and the impassioned emotions of the heart, it would seem to dilate, and now and then possessed a brilliancy and fascination, from which it was as impossible to turn away, as it was difficult steadfastly to behold; differing as much from the calm, cold, and colourless eye, that seems to indicate little short of a delight in human misery, and produces a sensation of fear, as the chiselled marble differs from an object sparkling with all the vivacity of light.

Persons who can penetrate beyond the surface, will find, by discoursing with some men, the general truth of a sentiment penned by the writer of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus—that “a man may be known by his look (or his eye), and one that hath understanding by his countenance.” Not that we can read in such a tablet what a man shall henceforth be, but what he is at present; and this may be allowed, without the charge of a too superstitious adherence to the art of the metoposcopist. Man has not unaptly been compared to “a harmonious organ,” and the more the simile is examined, the more will its truth appear. It is the heart that tunes and plays it—the tongue that gives utterance in song—and every portion of it, however minute, yields a distinct and appropriate sound, varying the effect agreeably to each varied affection. Nor can it be otherwise; for the separate parts are sustained by the spirits, and the spirits are the genuine issue of the heart. Hence, as the heart is affected with love, joy, sorrow, fear, hatred, it strikes a different key, and sends forth a different

note. When the heart touches one chord, and the tongue makes melody to another, the speech and the countenance are at variance ; and the man who cannot perceive such a solecism, and observe the dissonance, may justly accuse his senses of weakness and imperfection. There is no occasion to close in with the absurd maxim—fit only for the blind, however highly seasoned it may be—“ That it is necessary to eat a bushel of salt with a man, before you can perfectly understand him.” Sincerity is readable any where ; and hypocrisy is soon detected. As to the immediate subject in hand, the sweet glow of religious feeling in the heart, gave a heavenly expression to his countenance, and a melting tenderness to a naturally quick and penetrating eye—imparting a something to each, distinct and undefinable, yet always pleasurable, like the bloom to the fruit and the scent to the flower.

There is not unfrequently connected with men of uncultivated mind and exuberant fancy, a degree of forwardness and pertness, highly offensive to persons of taste and retired habits. An active mind is generally on the advance, and gives the meeting to persons before they are quite prepared for its outpourings. But though Crister was prompt, he was not obtrusive ; though earnest, not bold or impudent ; though cheerful, not trifling ;—always ready, and yet never forward. There was amazing vivacity ; a facility for catching hold of little incidents and passing events, and converting them to religious purposes, either for his own personal improvement in piety, or the advan-

tage of those around him. He gave a person the notion of a swallow on the wing,—darting through the air with ease and rapidity,—and selecting its provision from among the insect tribes, without impeding its flight;—insects in swarms, but often invisible to others than the bird itself. As he was not a regularly authorized public speaker, beyond relating his experience at a lovefeast and in his class, the faculty of quickly laying hold of any thing capable of affording nutriment either to the affections or the intelligence, was particularly perceptible in prayer. In this respect, some of his prayers, though exceedingly imperfect as *models*, comprised the substance of powerfully-impressive and important *lectures*. He would sometimes web one thought round another—dexterously disentangle the whole—take them up separately—and then shoot away with them, like so many meteors, one after another, glaring through the midnight heavens; and at other times, more nearly assimilated to the lightning, he would have come flash after flash upon the spirit—sudden, and startling; and in both cases, accompanied with a power and novelty of expression, that left the mind in a state of pleasing or painful suspense, according to the subject, and rarely without a fixity of purpose to improve. Fully to enjoy him, however, it was necessary for a person to divest himself occasionally of those little tastes he might have acquired by reading and society: these laid aside,—Crister's intellectual character was at once appreciated; his prayers and his converse became a spiritual repast.

He was rather of an uncultivated, than of a naturally coarse intellectual fibre, and would have admitted both of polish and expansion.

As he had been in his unrenewed state, so he was found in a state of grace,—sparkling and active,—active as fire itself. It is a remark of Locke, that “the Divine Being never unmakes the man, in forming the Christian.” Natural character remains the same,—all the faculties as at the first. The supernatural light which is poured into the mind from above, never extinguishes that which is natural; it will aid, but not destroy it. Every peculiar temperament, as well as mental faculty, is carried into religion. Here is one who is naturally gloomy;—another with the gaiety and cheerfulness of the lark;—a third, all meekness;—and a fourth, like a piece of touchwood,—instantly in a blaze, on the smallest provocation. The list might be enlarged; but sufficient is advanced, to enable a person to carry out the subject to any given length. Since religion, therefore, does not destroy natural character, but improves and sanctifies it—or, in other words, turns the stream into another channel, or directs the flame to another quarter; hence it is, that we have the same *variety* in the *church* as in the *world*. Peter, who was naturally rash and precipitate, was still forward to every good word and work, on his conversion to God. Saul, who was a fiery bigot, became the zealous apostle—burning with ardour in the cause against which he had breathed out threatenings and slaughter. John, who possessed great tenderness of spirit

could scarcely either speak or write on any other subject, besides that of the love of God to man. If a steady eye be not fixed on natural character, there will not only be no correct portrait of the man, but the whole narrative will associate with those biographies, which stand in certain publications, like so many tombstones in a country church-yard, distinguished chiefly by the *name*, and with little more information to the public, than that the subjects buried beneath a few common-place remarks—*lived* and *died*. But in cases where the power of delineation is possessed, while there is just cause of complaint on the one hand, of a cautious reserve, which prevents the whole man from coming into view, there is equal danger of excess, on the other; for artifice is confessed to have become such an embellisher of God's handy-work, that a person dare scarcely be what nature made him, through fear of being accounted a *lusus naturæ*. William Crister was a man and a Christian; and like all other trees of the Lord's planting, he bore two kinds of fruit—human and divine.

The fruit, however, which he at first yielded, though often human, and characterized by infirmity, was not *bad*. He had but little encouragement under the domestic roof for some time, to produce, what is denominated in Scripture, "good fruit." Religion appeared *there*, like a plant in the midst of the snows of Lapland—every thing calculated to keep it back, rather than a hot-house, or a genial clime and soil, gentle showers, and a warm sun, to hasten its growth and its produce. But he surmounted all. "My wife

and I," he was wont to say, "were like two persons in a boat, when I first became serious,—the one pulling in one direction, and the other in another: but on both becoming converted, we soon began to pull the same way—and then all went on pleasantly."

Some of his similes might seem to demand an apology, because of their familiarity and approach to low life. But there was a keeping in this. Like the prophet Amos, who chose to speak of his own art—having been "among the herdmen of Tekoa," and to select comparisons from rural life, he drew upon the circumstances in which he was placed, and the society in which he was brought up, for purposes of illustration: nor could those who might be disposed to censure him for a want of taste in his selections, adopt a style more suitable, were they to descant on the same subjects, to the same persons, and in similar circumstances. But whatever might be said of his taste or of his fancy, his judgment was generally found correct. It has been stated with truth, in reference to the sacred writers, that the same heavenly spirit which inspired Isaiah and Daniel in the palace, inspired David and Amos in their shepherd's tents: always choosing suitable interpreters of His will; and sometimes perfecting praise out of the mouths of babes: at one time using the eloquence of some; at another, making others eloquent, to subserve His great purposes. And thus, it may be added, the Divine Being still employs the poor rustic, as well as the man of refined taste and superior attainments,

each in his own way, and working with his own tools—tools fitted to the hand, and commensurate with the mental energies by which they are directed. “You must all blend,” said Crister, to one of his daughters, when he visited the family; “Yes, you must live and love like Christians,—blend like eggs in a pudding; for though distinct from each other, before they are put into the bason, yet when beat up by the hand, they all mix and flow together, and become *one*—a complete round whole, and fit for use.” This is something like the metaphorical language of the author of “Cardiphonia, or the Utterance of the Heart,” who remarked, that he always wished his Calvinism to resemble a piece of sugar in a cup of tea—*felt* every where, but *seen* no where. The simile employed by the honest collier to his daughter, was recollected after he was gone; whereas, if he had employed—supposing him capable of it, a classical allusion, or more exalted imagery, it would all have been lost upon her. What he said was left behind, and would be present with her, both in her preparations and at her daily repast. Exhortations to peace and unity were common with him; he hated domestic broils and ecclesiastical divisions, and was never known to mix himself up with them. His occupation furnished him with reasons against this; for “as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” Not being the subject of petty jealousies and heart-burnings himself, he fenced others from them by his advice and exhor-

tations. "Jealousy" was to him, as to the wise man, — "cruel as the grave: the coals thereof, coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Looking at his language, abstracted from his similes, though in the rudest state, and with all the peculiarities of the Northumbrian dialect, which, in many instances, would be as difficult to spell, as it would be for a person in the south to pronounce, yet there was great force in it. The observations of Landor, in his "Examination" of one of the first geniuses of his age, will apply here. "How many of our words," says he, "have more in them than we think of! Give a countryman a plough of silver, and he will plough with it all the season, and never know its substance. 'Tis thus with our daily speech. What riches lie hidden in the vulgar tongue of the poorest and the most ignorant? What flowers of Paradise lie under our feet, with their beauties and parts undistinguished and undiscerned, from having been daily trodden on!"

When the subject of these pages took his accustomed "walk about Zion," whose "walls are continually before" the Lord, he was sure to linger the longest on that spot, and to frequent it the most, which showed the brightest gilding, and glowed with the warmest beams of "the Sun of Righteousness." He had a keen perception of the good and the lively, and a strong relish for the more animated exercises of public worship. If an official person appeared to have but little of the life of God in his devotions, he was certain to have Crister's prayer of "clap fire to

him, Lord," sent to Heaven on his behalf. The honest collier knew, as well as those who were employed with him, that *coal*—whether embedded in the mine, or exposed in open day, could only be known in its real value by the application of *fire*. In this, in his esteem, consisted its real *use* to society. The Christian pulpit to him, resembled only the *grate* in the house of the Lord, and the *preacher*—untouched by Heaven, the *coal*;—all dead, and dull, and sombre, without the *fire* of God, like the promethean heat, to animate his discourses. A man, doling and drawling out eternal truth, by parsimonious sparks or shreds, and with all the chilling frigidity of a hard winter's frost—truth, which ought to be steeped in all the sublimities of Heaven, uttered with the warmth of a seraph, and driven home—absolutely wedged into the human soul, with all the weight which the unseen realities of an invisible world can give to it,—a man, thus dealing with truth, may assume the appearance of a *coal*, but not a "*coal of fire*;" and would—to such a person as Crister, be nearly as useful in the "horrible pit," as when only *apparently* "brought to bank." There may be vehemence, it is true,—mere animal fire,—much that may be traced up to the temperament, and peculiar constitution of both body and mind; and persons will be found occasionally to explode revivals, and to employ these terms, not only for the purpose of undervaluing the zealous exertions of their fellow-christians, whose labours operate like a standing rebuke to their own, but as an indirect apology for their indifference: but

still, though there may be *false fire*,—all is not *counterfeit*; there yet exists the blessed *reality*; a *copy* always implies an *original*. Though “Nadab and Abihu” offer “strange fire before the Lord,” yet their father Aaron has the real thing; of whom it is said, “he shall take a censor full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord—and he shall put the incense upon the fire—that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony.” And mistaken as the one may be for the other, in some particular cases, there can be no mistake with regard to the *cold* and the *dead*. No dispute can arise here; the case is decided, there are no *signs*—no *effects*—you *feel* nothing; and though you *hear* the voice, it is from the *tomb*. And are the *lifeless* to set themselves up as judges of the *life* of others? Will the public allow a blind man to decide upon colours, or a person, deaf from his birth, to pass judgment upon sounds? Such persons may deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive others.

Crister would have smiled at a corpulent man, though he knew nothing of either his eating or drinking to excess, delivering a lecture on abstinence. He would have been grieved with a man, had he heard him talking about being zealously affected in a good cause, while he himself remained a piece of personified frost-work, with his hands in his pockets, and without “a turned hair,” or a movement extraordinary. Uncultivated as he was, he knew from his Bible, that, on one of the Seraphim touching the lips of the evangelical prophet with a live coal from off the altar, he

both rolled with the thunder and flashed with the lightning. The Seer not only became a flame of fire himself, but was the honoured instrument of animating others, who, on the sunny side of Zion, were enabled, in more modern language, to exclaim—"It is good to be here." The Psalmist could say, "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." And the disciples could interrogate each other; "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" But the royal bard would be much more animated with the fire, than without it; and a minister will never utter "words that burn"—will never set the heart of another on fire, with all his attempts to *open* the Scriptures, unless the fire be first kindled in himself. Without this, a person may as well attempt to light a fire with a piece of cold, polished, unsmitten steel: and where fire exists, and is kept up, it will soon render itself visible by its effects. Without the fire of heaven, a preacher is like an icicle suspended from the eave of a house in a hard frost—clear, but long, and cold. It is an article in the poetic creed of Horace, that he who would draw tears from others, must first show his own; and certainly, he that would inflame others, must be in earnest himself. It would have been as serious a matter for Crister, in a religious sense, as for the "star-gazers" in the days of Isaiah, if there had not been "a coal to warm at, or a fire to sit before." Christian ministers, in the view of such a man, would be beheld like "the man clothed with linen," in the

vision of Ezekiel, and would be accosted with, "go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city."

He knew the difference, however, between a gentle, warm glow, and a crackling blaze—between the bright flame and the fire enveloped in nothing but smoke. It did not follow, in his estimation, that a minister was without the genuine warmth of devotional feeling, because he was without noise and vehemence. He was occasionally presented with examples in men, who, like stoves, without a single spark of fire apparent to the eye, diffused by their gentle, insinuating manner, a kindly religious warmth throughout every part of the spiritual temple; leaving a more lasting impression on the heart than the noisy declaimer, who, like a furnace, will sometimes burn and blacken without penetrating the centre—merely giving an outside scorching.—Natural character will have its influence on the Christian ministry, as well as on private life, and in order to a fair and equitable adjustment of praise or blame, an allowance must be made in both cases. A man may be calm, and yet not cold,—vehement, and yet not warm. The vehemence of some men is like an east wind—shrivelling and absorbing all the tender moisture in the religious system. Fire there must be, but still it must be the fire of God, between which and the feverish heats of the creature, there is as great a difference as there is between natural and artificial heat.

The noise produced by a heart-stirring ministry

was liable to be overrated by Crister. Being the subject of hallowed feeling himself, he was apt to take it for granted, that outward signs were indicative of the same feelings in others. Without attempting to justify every extravagance, a *noisy* meeting should, on some occasions, be rather *watched* than *suppressed*. The remarks of the late Dr. Adam Clarke, in a letter to a friend, may be read with advantage on this subject. "I am glad," he observes, "to find the work *quickens* at Altringham. But it seems you have no scarcity of *noise*. I know several who cannot bear these religious outcries, who are in every respect as sincere and upright as I could wish them. This is not the fault either of their heads or their hearts. Most people, indeed, lay the blame on their *Nerves*. Poor *Nerves*! many a sore burden they have to bear, but I hope they are *strong*—but in *your* case, and several others, I believe they may be justly accused.—Well, 'But do you think this *noise* does any good?' Verily, no. But I believe God does much good by it. The common people, who have never had the advantage of mental cultivation, hear through the medium of their passions. Every thing that affects *them*, arrests and fixes the attention, and then sacred Truths have, as we phrase it, *fair play* in their minds. However, a great deal depends upon the *Spirit* and *mode* of conduct of those who are made the instruments of this work: 'So we preached, and so ye believed' has a vast latitude of meaning. *We* have had hundreds converted here, and yet we have had very little extravagance of any kind. This, we consider, as a peculiar

mercy of God ; for, if it had been otherwise, we should in all probability have had bad work with Sailors, &c. One word more I will add,—I never knew any of these *noises*, however absurd, but God took advantage of it to do some good : therefore, I would not despise any of them.” On this subject, it is unnecessary to enlarge, as the writer has already delivered his sentiments upon it at the close of his memoir of the “ Village Blacksmith,” to which the reader is respectfully referred.

Deceived as Crister might be in some instances with external signs, yet he often manifested great shrewdness, and combatted with considerable adroitness the objections urged by the more sober part of the community to which he belonged. “ An *empty* waggon,” said a friend to him one day, “ makes the *most noise*.” “ Aye,” he returned, “ but you know a *full* one is not *silent*. It too, makes a noise,—but then it is more *solid*, and more *weighty* ; and you *know* by the *sound* also, that it is *full*.”

If there was one religious ordinance more than another, of prudential establishment, in which he felt himself at home, it was that of *Class-Meeting* ; and there it was—united of course to a fine devotional spirit, that he displayed most of native character. That such means should have been esteemed and enjoyed by him, is only what ought to be expected, from the circumstance of both his conviction and conversion having commenced and been completed there. He generally opened his addresses, with, “ I

was just thinking, friends," and then would have followed whatever might have occupied the mind.

Sitting in his accustomed place, the mercies of the previous week would first awaken his attention. "Praised be the Lord," he has been heard to say, "I have got through another week, unhurt in body, soul, and mind; I never had a bone broken in my life."

When reflecting on the state of those who had met with him in church-fellowship, but had been removed from earth by a sudden stroke, or by lingering illness, he would observe, like a prophet in vision, "I think I see them stretching out their necks, and looking over the battlements of Heaven, to see whether or not we are coming—whether we have not lost our way. Bless the Lord, we are on the road." In the course of the same meeting, and in allusion to the same subject, but without any prefatory remarks, he would abruptly observe, "We should always be ready when the knock comes to the door." On one occasion, after a breathless pause, subsequent to the last expression, he applied his knuckles to the boards, startling those who sat next him, rapidly and energetically enquiring, "Are you ready?" replying, "Yes;" next adding, "Come away then." To persons who knew him not, as well as those who were acquainted with his capabilities, there would appear something like trick in the action; but the mind was so completely absorbed with devotional subjects, that he was less like a conscious being at such periods than at

others ; and seemed as likely, in such a state, to be roused from his reveries by the sound of his own hand, as to awaken the attention of those around him. Any thing like manœuvre in the concerns of the soul, is to be reprehended ; because it not only argues a want of sincerity on the part of the agent, but is beneath the dignity of a God of infinite perfection to sanction. There is, however, such a feeling conveyed to the heart, as well as such an indescribable something in the manner, subsisting always between that which is genuine and that which is fictitious, that experience alone steps forward in all such cases and records its decision.

We are still not to judge altogether of the characteristic peculiarities of an action ; for some of the more eccentric in the sacred writings, have not only been sanctioned by the Divine Being after their performance, but have originated in His appointment. Such a man as Crister would have fulfilled to the letter, every prophetic action and evolution ; he would have “smitten the ground” with Joash, and would have aided the monarch, like Elisha, in directing the flight of “the arrow ;”—with Jeremiah, he would have placed the “linen girdle on his loins,”—hid it in “the hole of a rock by the Euphrates”—improved upon the mechanism of the “potter” and his “clay”—“broken the bottle before the ancients of the people”—put “bonds and yokes” upon his “neck”—and would have “broken the yoke” like Hananiah, after it had been taken off the prophet ;—or with Agabus, would

have stripped Paul of his "girdle" and "bound himself with it"—"hands and feet," as a sign of what the Apostle had to expect at Jerusalem. Eccentric and sudden as were many of Crister's movements, they were all natural; they never offended; they fit him with the exactness of his clothes; and like his coat, if seen on the person of another, would have been recognised by the public. They were rarely premeditated, and were generally the offspring of genuine feeling; and though repeated occasionally, with intervals between, the repetition was only when the same feeling was in full operation.

The language of humble and familiar life was often used with peculiar effect by him, while thus encircled by his fellow-christians, and may be considered as confirmatory of the remark of Landor just employed. He observed, on the subject of temptation, "I always get quit of the devil by taking him before his *bettors*." Then, turning to his class-mates, he added, "Keep none of the devil's secrets, otherwise he will be sure to keep you. When the arch-enemy slips unnoticed behind your back, and you find him whispering over your shoulder, take his suggestions directly to the Lord. Do this, and you will soon find, on looking round, that he is off to somebody else. He will not stop there to be exposed. This is the way I do; and many a *tue* (conflict) I have with him down the pit. But when he comes, I get me down behind the *brattish*—begin to pray—and away he goes." If in this case the enemy were not slain, as Benaiah "slew two lion-like men, and also a lion in

the midst of a pit in time of snow," he was at least foiled in the fight: and often was the pit converted into an arena by him, as well as into a place of worship, a hundred and forty fathoms beneath the termination of the old Roman Wall, where Severus had displayed his idolatrous rites, and near which Roman altars had been erected, as well as Roman conflicts maintained.

Having received a special baptism of the Spirit, he remarked with peculiar feeling on one occasion, "I have been at the *Teem-in* to-day;"—in allusion to the waggon, loaded at the pit, and reaching the end of the rail-way, at which point a bolt is knocked out, when the bottom of the waggon—hinged on the opposite side, gives way, and the coals instantly rush down the spout, where the vessel—laved by the Tyne, and about to transport them to the metropolitan mart, is ready to receive them. To others than persons acquainted with the localities and provincialisms of the neighbourhood, such language would have been incomprehensible; but he was surrounded by those who could instantly interpret it into his having been at the throne of grace, and there received a kind of wholesale blessing.

In an equally elevated mood, after having led the class at Prudhoe once, he observed to a friend, "We had a glorious season:" then, with a view to impress the occasion more deeply upon the mind, and make it live in the recollection of another, as it did in his own, he added, "Why, the steam was so high, that it really seemed as though the cylinder top would have

flown off;" closing with one of his witticisms—"it was like first love, enough to warm the buttons of the coat."

Speaking to some friends at West Moor, on the subject of religious beginnings, he remarked, "When the *Davy Lamp* first came up, we looked at the bit thin *gauze* (wire work) around the flame, and thought that such a thing—so slightly constructed, could never be the means of protecting us from danger. What, a bit thing like that! a bit *gauze*! But, by and bye, when we made the trial—saw the flame beginning to lift—and then burn steadily, we got more confidence. In the course of time, our *confidence* was *perfect*. So it is with religion. Some persons are timid at first; they are not certain whether it will quite answer their purpose and their interests. But confidence gains ground; they find religion profitable for all things; they can go with it into the darkest nook—stand in the midst of dangers and death—or walk in safety. They reach, at length, the *full assurance of faith*."

At a time when the work of God was rather low at Carville, and in the neighbourhood, he not only lived in hope of seeing greater prosperity himself, but was the instrument of encouraging the faith and prospects of others. "The work is the Lord's," said he; "He waits to be gracious. We have been blessed in times past; and He has revived His work in other places. What cannot the Lord do? Think of the revival there was the other day, when no less than three thousand persons were brought in at one

time! Let us pray on—believe on—and we shall be catching the skirt of a shower.” One of the members, delighted to hear the tidings of a revival, asked him, on leaving the class, “What is the name of the place at which the work has broken out, of which you were speaking?” “Why,” he enquired, “do you not know?” surprised that the *number* did not lead to the association of *place*. With equal simplicity, the person replied “This is the first time I have heard of it.” Crister quickly asked, “Did you never hear of the *day* of *Pentecost*?” The person being somewhat disappointed, and desirous of apologising for the dulness manifested, returned, “You said ‘*the other day*.’” Crister, who had been dwelling on the subject, and had associated a modern revival with it, attended with its prayer-meetings, and its penitents crying out for mercy, and who seemed to be in the midst of it, in his imaginings, replied—“It is no more; time is nothing when compared with eternity; it is but just like *the other day*.” And as a rebuke for the apparent want of interest in things comparatively remote, as well as for apparently cherished unbelief, he subjoined, “We should always bring those things *near*; they should be *present* with us to encourage us. What God did on the day of Pentecost, he can do now. There may be a revival at Carville as well as at Jerusalem. God is the same—the work is the same—and there is the same need and encouragement now as then.”

When his leader found it necessary to speak closely to the members on particular subjects, Crister would

have sat like a person watching another in progress with a work of importance; and as the lights in which he viewed different subjects varied often from those of others, he would have struck in with an occasional sentence, like a response, saying, "That is all right;" instantly subjoining, with his eye directed towards the person addressed, "but mind you, Tom," or "mind you, Bill, there is another thing, which he has forgotten." Then, like a last stroke, to rivet all that had preceded, he would dash into the conscience or the understanding some fine, bold, close, searching remark, or would employ some appropriately striking illustration, which had been awakened in the mind by the observations of the leader, and which might have slumbered there but for such observations. Indecorous and annoying as this would be, if generally adopted, it was not only tolerated here, but next to courted for the value of what was educed.

For a leader to have such a man in his class, was no ordinary blessing; and more especially—as in the present case, when the leader knew the man, could bear with what might prove an occasional annoyance to others, and could turn all his best qualities to a good account in the work of God. Crister was one of the number of whom Mrs. Gibson speaks, in the "Memoirs" published of her by the Rev. F. A. West—"Memoirs" partaking of the calm sun-shine of spirit peculiar both to the biographer and the subject: "I have just returned from Carville," she observes, "whither I went yesterday, and was much

edified by attending Mr. Reay's class, which indeed was one object of my visit. Often while hearing these simple-hearted people declare their Christian experience, I exclaimed within myself, 'What hath God wrought!' 'Of stones he hath raised up children to Abraham:' Men, who without religion, never would have had two ideas, declaring their experience with a precision and propriety worthy of divines; and with the energy, the zeal, and the simplicity of the primitive Christians. What an ennobling principle religion is! an agency on the mind and soul of man, really performing what alchemists sought in vain to do in metals—changing all into gold!"

In his more felicitous moments, he would slip in a hasty remark, as a person proceeded with his experience, and before it was deemed proper for the leader to offer advice. "I have been living next door to glory for some time past," said a person, interrogated on his state of mind. Crister started on his feet on the fall of the sentence, as though bounding at the instance of an invisible power, exclaiming, with the ardour of a seraph, "Never leave it, then, till you *shift*;" telling him, in effect, to remain there till death; for if he were so *near*, as to be living *next door* to it, he was not only as close to it as he could well be in this world, but the remove would be exceedingly short, when summoned hence. On his own state he would say, "I wish to go full sail to glory."

Under a fine glow of feeling, the people were sometimes relieved also by a brief sentence sent across the

room by him, from the corner where he sat : “ How do you feel there, friends ? O, there is a heavenly breeze here ! It is just wafting past, and refreshing the soul.” To persons, strangers to experimental religion, such language—had they been introduced into the room on the occasion, would have been deemed enthusiastic. But Crister was in accordance with Scripture in his phraseology : “ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Even a teacher in Israel, like Nicodemus, asking, “ How can these things be ? ” could not alter the subject ; nor would he, on such an enquiry, command our respect.

In prayer, as in speaking, it was the same. A person who was praying that the Lord would “ bless the ministry of the word, and make it like a nail fastened in a sure place,” was instantly responded to—“ Aye, Lord, and *click* (clench) it on the other side ;” Crister’s additional ardour making it doubly sure, by preventing it from starting. With great force of expression, and fervour of feeling, he threw into his own prayer, on one occasion, the following petition : “ Grant that the key-stone of the arch, which supports the fabric of hell upon earth, may fall out, and that the whole building may come down at once, and sink into flaming ruin ! ” a sentiment in perfect keeping with the purpose of the Son of God, who “ was manifested, that he might destroy the works

of the devil ;” the expressive word, in the original, agreeably to critics, leading us to look upon sin and misery as a *fabric*, of which the devil is the great *architect*, and which Christ has come to overthrow and demolish.

CHAPTER III.

Visits the Chamber of the Sick—Faith—Instances of Success in visiting the Sick—His peculiar Mode of pleading the Promises—Brings a Mariner to Class—Individuality in Prayer—Too Personal—Respect for Christian Ministers—Fault-finders—The Humbled Penitent—Freedoms of Expression at the Throne of Grace—His Manner of beginning the Sabbath—Love of the Scriptures.

BEING distinguished for his piety and power in prayer, he was occasionally sent for to visit other abodes than the cottages of the poor. A gentleman, exquisitely sensitive, with an intellect of no common order, and of considerable literary attainments—who, in fact, seemed to be all over spirit, sent for Crister to pray with him in the midst of his despondencies. On his being introduced into the room where the invalid lay stretched upon his couch, persuading himself that he had become a “cast-a-way,” he took his seat, apparently surprised with the splendour and richness of the furniture and the drapery, occasionally shooting one of his quiet, yet quick glances, at the pictures and more ornamental parts of the gilding and workmanship. A degree of restlessness pervaded his visual organs, till the excellent man, who required his aid, rivetted his attention by his sighs and forebodings, stating, that he had no faith, wanted the witness of the Spirit, was solicitous only of the favour of God, but had no

hope of ever being saved. Crister sat greedily devouring every word, with his eyes of fire fixed upon him; and yet, in their fiery brilliancy, there was a sweet glow of tenderness, while his remarks, in the broad Northumbrian dialect, were equally kind, though blunt, quick—and pertinent, as replies. Having heard the case, he knelt down, and in a kind of half prayer and half exhortation, made his appeals both to the patient and to the throne of grace, telling the Lord, “that he believed, that all that was the matter with the subject of prayer was, he would not give Him credit for speaking the truth.” Taking hold of this, he immediately bore away in a strain of impassioned feeling, thanking God for a divine revelation, expressing his own confidence in its truth, rejoicing in the consolations he derived from it,—his thoughts almost constantly revolving round the promises of the gospel, and the *veracity* of the giver. After praying some time with fluency and fervency, he abruptly concluded, and while yet upon his knees, and strong in faith, he enquired—expecting nothing short of brightening prospects, “How do you feel?” repeating with the same breath, “Lay hold of God; rely on His truth—for He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner.” Alas! shut up in unbelief, he was only responded to by the sighs of the prisoner, who could believe for any one except himself. Still kneeling by the bedside, and finding the gloom unpenetrated by a single ray of hope, he again broke away in prayer, and turning upon the *love*, as he had dwelt upon the *truth* of God, his whole soul seemed warmed, melted, filled, and

overpowered with its influence; occasioning “a joy unspeakable, and full of glory;” which joy, by the way, was not an *impromptu*, experienced only on stirring or public occasions, but a habitual feeling. On a second abrupt termination of his devout aspirations to God, and still in a kneeling position,—conveying the impression of a strong straight-forward current, either taking another direction, or suddenly arrested in its progress by an embankment, with its spray dashing over the top—he dropped his up-turned countenance, and bent it towards the object of his compassion, beaming with tender and joyous expression, accompanied with an inquisitive earnestness, again enquiring—“How do you feel now?—Is faith in exercise?” Despair, alas, was still in its stronghold; the heart was bolted and barred against all approach with the “precious promises;” and every avenue leading to its door, was vigilantly guarded by the sophisms of learning and unbelief, with a mind naturally predisposed to turn to the dark side of the “pillar,” which was to him, as to the Egyptians, “a cloud and darkness;” God, as he supposed, with regard to himself, having “made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.” The impression of *reprobation* was deep, and alone indulged. Without having once risen to relieve himself by changing his position, Crister—as if touched with another live coal from off the altar, bore away once more in prayer. He caught the term “*reprobate*,” and told the Lord in his simplicity, that if acceptance were grounded on

character, he was sure he had been a greater "*rip*" than the person for whom he was interceding, and that if He had been disposed to "*pass by*" any one, it would have been himself; dwelling largely at the same time on a *want of merit* in the *creature*—the *atoning sacrifice of Christ*—and the fact of God being no "*respector of persons*." High as he was before, he was still more fervent and more elevated in this last appeal.— Dropping as suddenly again as at first, and having felt as though it were impossible for any one to remain unmoved in the midst of so much of the power and presence of God, he proceeded with his usual interrogatories, to which he received the usual replies. Starting from his knees, big with disappointment, and as if impatient with the perseverance and obstinacy of unbelief, he said, "I tell you what, Mr. —, it appears to me as though nothing would satisfy you short of God Almighty coming down to bed to you, to speak to you with an audible voice: and that he will never do. You may look for this to the day of your death, and drop into hell at last. You will be sure to be disappointed. And why not? God has given you His word, and He will give you no new revelation. Make use of what you have. He tells you *there* that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner—that Christ tasted death for every man—and that he that believeth shall be saved. If you will not give Him credit for speaking the truth, take the consequence, for 'he that believeth not shall be damned.'" So saying, he closed, like a medical attendant, with "I can do no more for you," and departed. The former

part of the address shocked the delicate mind of the desponding suppliant, from the familiarity of the expression employed, and startled him like the distant sound of blasphemy ; and yet, to the soundness of the theology, he could offer no objection. His unbelief was posed at every point ; gladly would he have abandoned it ; but he was left as he was found ; a case that goes to support the truth of the position,—that we may believe *if* we will, though not *when* we will. This secures the glory of God, whose *gift* faith is, and who blesses every man with a *day of visitation* : and at the same time affords no encouragement to the persevering sinner, who, having turned a deaf ear to the voice of mercy, may be led to indulge a hope that heaven will be at his beck, when the world recedes from his view, and its pleasures can no longer be retained. As to the person in question, Crister had to cope in him with a constitutional melancholy ; an affliction of which he had as slender an experimental knowledge as most men, and was as little acquainted with its remedy.

This same person called upon him afterwards, and conversed with him a considerable length of time. *Faith* being the chief topic of conversation, he observed to Crister, “ there is but *one faith*, of saving efficacy ; but there are different *degrees* of it : there is *faith—little faith—and mighty faith.*” “ Aye,” returned the animated collier, “ the last is it ; keep at that ; I always like to be at the top.” Speaking of the conversation afterward, which also became the subject of prayer, he said,—“ Why, that man is sure to get

saved; he can talk about nothing else, but about Christ and faith. Do you think that God will send such a man as that to the devil? No, no." Then, with a fine burst of feeling, and as though God were as ready to admit, as faith and charity are ready to perform, works of supererogation, he subjoined, " Bless him, if he cannot believe, I'll believe for him;" thus denoting his confidence in the present and final salvation of the subject.

He was, in the fullest sense of the word, an excellent " SICK MAN'S COMPANION," and though not altogether free from *errata* in expression, yet he was " sound in the faith," and would invariably guide the subject directly to the cross—an object perceived at every point of the road over which he travelled. Being in company with some of his friends, who had attended a religious meeting at Newcastle, one of them, on returning home, requested Crister to call with him upon an aged relation at the Ouse Burn, who was much afflicted, and who—though partially roused to a sense of his moral wretchedness, was nevertheless sunk in a state of the grossest ignorance on the subject of experimental religion. After some conversation, prayer was proposed, in which two or three engaged. Crister then said, " Stop a little, friends, and let the old man pray for himself;" and looking at him, accosted him with tenderness, " You must now pray for yourself." He returned falteringly, " I cannot pray;" adding, " how can I pray, when I never *learned* to do it?" " But you *must* pray," replied Crister. " My dear man," rejoined the sufferer,

“I tell you I cannot; I never prayed in my life.”
“I’ll teach you,” said Crister; “*say* after me.” He then, with the ability of an actor of the first order—but deeply serious, threw himself in his *language, sentiments, feelings*, and in the faltering, feeble *intonations* of his *voice*, into the position of an *old, afflicted, ill-instructed penitent*, groping his way to the light, and desirous of happiness. The patriarch in years followed him like a child repeating its lesson—word for word—increasing, as far as strength would allow, in earnestness of manner and elevation of voice, till considerable feeling was excited; and God, whose spirit produced that feeling,—thus honouring the simple means, and ever delighting in prayer, poured a flood of light into the mind, when the old man broke away like a child from its nurse, just beginning to feel its feet, exclaiming, “Glory, glory be to God; I can pray myself now;” and so continued some time in the work of praise and prayer, unaided by those around, to the agreeable surprise of all present. Crister had no more doubt, that the Divine Being *could* work in this way, than he could doubt that light was brought out of darkness at the creation, when the words were uttered. “Let there be light;” than that Christ “opened the understanding” of the disciples after his resurrection from the dead; or than that Saul was instantaneously enlightened on his route to Damascus: nor was he less certain that God *would* do it, provided faith were put into exercise, agreeably to that declaration, “According to your faith be it unto you.” Believe for little, and little will be th

result ; believe for much, and great things will follow. This was the Scriptural principle upon which Crister proceeded ; and hence, as in a preceding case, he was the advocate of *mighty faith*.

On calling also on one of his daughters at Newcastle, he was informed by her of the case of a young man, who resided next door, of a consumptive habit, and apparently near death. He expressed a wish to visit him, but was dissuaded from it by his informant, who told him, that the person in question had a strong feeling of objection to have any religious characters near him, or to have the subject of religion introduced in his presence. These were so many arguments to Crister in favour of a visit ; and touched with compassion for the young man, he went to the door—raised the latch with a gentle hand—and placing his head, with an innocent smile playing upon his face, between the partially open door and door-frame, he saw him seated near the fire, pale, and like a skeleton merely skinned over. The youth—for he was little more, slowly and laboriously turned his eye towards the door ; and there he saw Crister, who, with tender emotion, and with the latch still in his hand, as if on the point of immediately turning on his heel, in order to hasten home, accosted him in his usual kind and familiar manner,—“ I was just about leaving, but I thought I would just look in at you on passing, to see and enquire how you are to-day ; you seem very poorly yet.” “ I am,” returned the emaciated form—“ I am very poorly.” Crister’s look and voice subdued the hitherto obdurate heart ; and

he was asked to step forward. This was what he wished, though he showed no great forwardness to it;—moving on, and dropping a word or two of sympathy into the ear of the afflicted, as he approached the fire. The *body*, with its infirmities and afflictions, was the first and apparently only theme. Crister, in his sympathies, began to wind himself round the young man's affections; he became less and less reserved—Crister more and more spiritual—confidence was gained—the plan of salvation was unfolded—the necessity of a preparation for death was enforced—prayer was proposed and complied with—and Crister left him an awakened sinner.

There was, as will have been perceived, a peculiarity both in the *manner* and in the *matter* of his addresses at a throne of grace, which can only be resolved into natural character, a lively imagination, quick perception, and a want of cultivation. While he was praying in the class once, with great fervour of spirit, and rapidity of expression, he took a copy of Clarke's "Scripture Promises" from his pocket, which he generally carried about with him; and without the least interruption in his devotion, or breaking down in a sentence, he turned, with the rapidity of thought itself, to several encouraging and appropriate passages—read them with the same quickness and in the same voice as that with which he had been pouring out the extemporaneous effusions of his soul—made them the ground-work of increasing faith, hope, love, and joy, and of still greater earnestness after full salvation—pointing to them—saying, "Here they are, Lord;

they are Thine own; we claim them through a crucified Redeemer;—then, turning to his class-mates, to encourage them in their expectations, he added, “Yes, they are here,—one here and another there—all sparkling from the mint, like new coined guineas! pick them up—take them off—and pay your way with them;” bursting forth in a torrent of gratitude, and bearing every spirit with his own to “the third heavens,” where “things unutterable”—if not *seen*, were *felt* in all their fulness. On other occasions, he would have taken up the *promises*, denominated by him, “the ‘I WILL’ promises”—strung them together in his prayer—enforced them with peculiar energy on the minds of associate suppliants—and pleaded them with a power of faith at the throne of grace which was rarely denied. He would have run on,—*I will* forgive their iniquity, and *I will* remember their sin no more—*I will* be merciful to their unrighteousness—*I will*, be thou clean—*I will* walk among you—I, the Lord, *will* be their God—*I will* be to them a God, &c. &c. : and then, in the strength of faith in God, and in the warmth of love to man, he would exclaim, “Here is an *I will* for every *state*, and for every *person*; and what God *wills*, he is *disposed* to do,—and what he is *disposed* to do, he *can* do.” In praying with *penitents*, he was peculiarly felicitous for power and expression. There was a kind of irresistible omnipotence in his prayer for persons in that state; and there have been instances of prayer-meetings being held for a great length of time, and on the point of closing in disappointment, when he has struck

in, and the persons for whom prayer had been made, have entered into the liberty of the children of God. He occasionally reminded a fellow-worshipper of an archer, who had strung his bow, and winged his shaft, which—while the latter was on its way to the mark, was followed by the eye, and by his warmest wishes; sending another petition after what had preceded, and was already winging its way to heaven, with—“Lord, answer *that* prayer:”—then abruptly pausing a few seconds, as if waiting for tidings respecting its success, and listening for the voice of the Spirit in the inner man.

A mariner, who had entered the Tyne in the course of his calling, was met by Crister a few weeks before his death, and taken to class by him, affording a little scope both for his piety and imagination. Scarcely any thing escaped his eye—and few were the circumstances that were permitted to pass unimproved. He was delighted to see the honest tar, who was exposed to as many deaths as himself; and being requested to pray, the stranger was not neglected. Anxious for his safety, and his own fancy and best feelings being in lively exercise, he prayed, that the scul of the voyager might be like a clean ship—that all might be found right when the pilot came on board—that, if freighted at all, he might be richly laden with Divine Grace—and that, at death, when about to enter the fair haven, the custom-house officers might find no contraband goods in his possession, exposing him to seizure and to the prison of hell. Having run on for some time, employing—to the delight of the man

himself, and to the surprise of all present, a number of nautical phrases, representing this life as a voyage, with its storms and its calms, its depths and its shallows, its rocks and its quicksands, and “an abundant entrance” at the close, he rose from his knees, and with equal presence of mind, gave out, from recollection,

“Come, heavenly wind, and blow
A prosperous gale of grace,
And waft my soul away,
To heaven,—its destined place;
Then, in full sail, my port I’ll find,
And leave the world, and sin, behind.”

The mariner visited the class about three weeks after Crister’s death, and was much affected on hearing it announced.

This was not an extraordinary, but a common case. Names, persons, and things, had all their associations, and kept not only the imagination, but the emotions of the soul, in constant employment; and every workman in the vineyard for the day, had an interest in his intercessory prayers. If *Mr. Mann* had been appointed to preach, he would pray, that he might come up in the strength, and appear before the people in the genuine character, of “a *man* of God.” Should it have been the *junior* preacher,—then, that he might be imbued with the spirit of a youthful *Timothy*, or that Jesus would come up with the “lad” with his “five barley loaves and two small fishes.” Or, if a person appeared on the plan, whose christian name was *David*,—in such case, that he might be directed to pick up a stone, in crossing the brook, on his way to the place,

and enabled by his sling—simple in itself, but mighty through God, to bring down the Goliath of Sin! And in case of the local brethren being appointed,—that the God of Joshua would stand by the *priests* bearing the “*ram’s horns*”—breathe through them by his spirit—and lay prostrate by their blast the walls of Jericho,—every strong-hold of Satan!

This individuality, in the absence of the parties concerned, sometimes amounted to personality in the presence of others. He was invited to partake of the hospitality of a gentleman, in Elden Square, Newcastle, who has since gone to his reward. Crister, as in the house of the gentleman previously noticed, was amazed when he was ushered into the apartment, but was most of all struck with a splendid mirror over the mantel-piece. He gazed in silence; and after some time had elapsed, was requested to pray. It was, in one sense, an unfortunate moment. He had come out warm from a Missionary Meeting, where he had been listening to the wants and woes of the heathen, and the impoverished state of the funds, as expatiated upon by the respective speakers, and towards the collection at which meeting he had even given of his *necessities*. Unaccustomed to such scenes as those upon which he had just closed his eyes for prayer, and knowing how little was required to supply his own wants, he was unable to disengage his mind from them. He run over some of the most costly articles in the room, but especially the mirror, which, when compared with his own shaving-glass, seemed completely to absorb the mind—never having had a full-length view

of himself before, and then recollecting again the millions, perishing for lack of knowledge, he proceeded almost beyond endurance, stating that, if the whole of the cost had been thrown into the Missionary Treasury, it was unknown how many souls might have been saved by it; leaving the proprietor his prayer as a subject for serious meditation. While the invitation to such abodes is a proof of the estimation in which he was held, and his prayer shows the hazard which the owners run, the good part in which the prayerful rebuke was taken, reflected a much higher honour on the gentleman's Christianity than he had credit for, because of the costly article which he possessed. Crister was honest, but not prudent; and his imprudence was the result of his circumstances and his education.

He was not, however, strictly speaking, one of those who assumed the *humble* character of a *fault-finder*—persons who prove a hindrance rather than a help to the ministry; operating like a *drag* to the wheel of a carriage, by impeding its progress—always towards the *rear*, *low*, and in the *mud* themselves, and seldom put on at the right *time* and in the right *place*. Characters like these, and known as such in a society, obtain a prominence for a time; but it is the prominence often—to change the metaphor, of a fungus growing out of a rank heap of corruption, which, with its production, has to be swept away—as noisome, and injurious to the growth of more wholesome plants. Crister, surrounded by several friends one day, said,—“ We should always endeavour to bear

up the hands of the preachers,—not finding fault with them, but rather praying for them. We were not in a very good state at Carville once ; we were a little captious ; but I will tell you how we did. We agreed to pray for the preachers ; accordingly, we met—prayed—and the Lord met with us. The first preacher that came was Mr. D—, and he was so improved, that he seemed to preach as he never preached before. Next came Mr W., who was still better than his predecessor. After him came Mr. G—, and he exceeded both. Then came a Local Preacher ;—why, he surpassed all. Thus we went on—getting better and better, till there seemed to be no bad left.” There is an admirable moral embodied here. When the heart is right with God, evils very often diminish from without ; an improved state of feeling produces an improved state of things. If *fault-finders*—those fungus roots of society, and fit only for the shelter of frogs and reptiles—distinguished for croaking, and for their venomous qualities, were to consecrate the same time to prayer, carrying the injunction of the apostle into effect, “ Brethren, pray for us,” which they expend in correcting less faults than their own, and in perfecting better men than themselves, “ the word of the Lord” would be much more free in its course, and would be much more likely to “ be glorified.” But there is a class of individuals who are for reforming all, except themselves, while they themselves require it most—fault-finding constituting itself one of their leading defects.

When the late Mr. Dungate, whose memoirs have

been published by the Rev. Jas. Heaton, preached his third sermon at Killingworth Colliery, in company with his friend Mr. R. S. Stanley, an extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God rested upon the congregation. A prayer-meeting succeeded preaching, and Crister was there. Among others, a person of the name of M. C., who afterwards became a useful local preacher, was in deep distress of mind. He was so completely horror-stricken with a sense of the odiousness of sin, and the punishment to which he had exposed himself, through it, that he literally "*roared*," like the Psalmist, "by reason of the disquietness of his heart." The people in the neighbourhood were raised, and the chapel was surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children. Several of the friends prayed with such as were oppressed with a load of sin, directing special attention to the person in question. Crister, with a degree of impatience, and as if grieved with their unbelief, stopped one good man, saying, "There now, hold your peace, and let me pray a bit." With deep reverence, he adverted in his prayer to the *majesty* of the Supreme Being,—as high and lifted up,—filling immensity,—and yet from his holy and lofty dwelling-place, stooping to take up his abode with the lowly,—with such as possessed a broken and a contrite spirit: then, quickly turning upon the penitent, as an object of compassion,—and as if the act were a sufficient argument to move compassion,—"*There he is, Lord*," said he: "*surely he is humble*, for he has unscrewed his leg, to enable him to get to the *ground*, that he may be *low* enough." The man

had lost a leg, and in the depth of self-abasement, had actually taken off its substitute, as referred to by Crister—though unperceived by others; and yet, it was adverted to with such melting tenderness, that pity, rather than a smile—ludicrous as was the association, was excited. He took the case as it lay before him, and in the way in which he was most impressed by it—carried it to Him who looks at the sincerity of the worshipper—and obtained the blessing, for the penitent “went down to his house justified.”

Though deeply imbued with feelings of reverence himself, his expressions sometimes produced the reverse in a fellow-worshipper. In a prayer-meeting at Newcastle, he employed some freedoms of expression, forced from him through an apparent want of feeling in the meeting; he observed in his prayer, that the Lord was often with them as early as five o'clock in the morning at Carville, but that then—though eight o'clock, he had not drawn near—intimating a want of faith and fervour in the people to bring down the blessing. A person—not remarkable for either sweetness of temper or zeal, stopped him, and said, “Recollect, brother, whom you are addressing;—it is the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity.” Crister rose from his kness, and leaving the meeting, said, “You can have it your own way.” His friends simultaneously left with him. Now, the sentiments employed by him at Killingworth Colliery show, that even in the midst of his outbreakings of quaintness, he was not without deep reverential awe; but the

contrast between the ludicrous and the sublime was often so striking and sudden, that, to a grave person—and especially the interrupter in question, who often exercised the patience of all around him with his own prayers, it was the less likely to be endured. But, indeed, he was not the man for persons of grave habits; and he would have been open to still severer censure, had he been tested by his *expression* and *manner*, rather than by his *sincerity*. It was always the latter that gave the preponderance of the beam in his favour with his friends,—some of whom had to tolerate him, when unable to enter upon his justification.

On the morning of the Sabbath, a prayer-meeting was regularly held in the chapel, which commenced at seven o'clock. It was often but thinly attended; but Crister and his leader always made two of the number. As a chapter of the bible was generally read, the former usually directed his way to the chapel before the opening of the service, for the purpose of prayer, and in order to select what he deemed a proper chapter for the day,—something peculiarly striking and impressive; and there he might have been seen through the window, sitting alone, if not with “patriarchal grace,” like the poet’s “Cottar,” at least with cheerfulness and earnestness,—with all those pleasurable emotions experienced by persons resolved on furnishing their friends with a rich repast; and of whom it might be said,

“He wales a portion wi’ judicious care.”

His mind, like the bird of the sun, thus hovering over the sacred ground of the Bible, would have instantly

descended, and seizing on a chapter which forcibly arrested attention, he would have handed the Bible or Testament to his leader on his arrival ; and, pointing to it, as proper food, for the old as well as the young, would again have feasted upon it as manna from Heaven. In the course of reading, he would sometimes give utterance to a thought, comprised in two or three brief sentences, which, while it came with the suddenness and power of an electrical shock upon the feelings of both the reader and the hearer, would have fallen like a flash of light upon the passage. On other occasions, he would reserve a reflection or two to the close ; and when unmoved in either case, he was certain to make it the subject matter of some part of his prayer,—thus, furnishing a constant variety, and raising the mind to God through the medium of His own word.

The high tone of Christian feeling, which was always perceptible to others, may be accounted for in the manner in which he began the Sabbath. It was not merely a quarter of an hour before service that was devoted to private purposes ; but almost regularly, he was found in the temple *two hours* before the prayer-meeting commenced, winter and summer, in the storm and in the calm, whether wet or dry. The House of God was his *closet* for retirement, on the morning of the Lord's day ; and baptized there, with the Holy Ghost, he came forth like a giant refreshed with new wine. In winter, he lit the stove, and sat beside it with his Bible, or knelt within the shade of a pew. Though the *fire* continued burning in the

Jewish temple, the *lamps* were probably extinguished just before sun-rise, and here, like old Eli and Samuel, who seemed to have apartments near the ark, Crister, —“ ere the lamp of God went out of the temple of the Lord,” was found, not “laid down,” but in active devotion, waiting to hear the voice of his Maker.

CHAPTER IV.

*Partiality to Prayer-Meetings—Power in acting and painting—
A fine Climax—Startling Effects of his Conduct to Juvenile
Transgressors in the Pit—A sudden Hell—Delights to set the
Minds of others imperceptibly afloat on different Subjects—
Loves and Listens to the Voice of Prayer—Is a Nursing
Father to young Converts—His Anxiety for the Salvation of
Sinners—Out-door Prayer-Meetings—A Revival—His Con-
duct in it—Comprehensive Views—Perseverance and Malignity
of Satan—The Destruction of Sin, necessary to religious
Prosperity—Power over the Devil.*

BEING a man of prayer, he was extremely partial to prayer-meetings; and was constant in his attendance at different places. One in particular, may be noticed, which he, in connexion with some other friends, attended, at Byker Hill, ten or twelve years before his death. Here, when the number of persons accustomed to conduct the meeting was incomplete, and also when he felt desirous of impressing the people with religious truth, he would give a short address, a good deal in the dehortatory and exhortatory mood. On perceiving a goodly company one evening, composed of mixed characters, and persons of different ages, he addressed the *young*, the *old*, and the *middle-aged*, giving a portion to each, agreeably to the lives they had led, and the length of their stay in a probationary state. Just at the moment he had strung the people

up to a certain point of highly excited feeling—himself being under an extraordinary influence, he suddenly stepped forward with one foot, inclining his body in the same direction, like a person about to throw himself headlong over a frightful precipice, and exclaimed, “O, bless you, I love you so much, that I could dash away downward, and take a dip into hell for you, if it would only be the means of saving you :” and then, having set every imagination to work, by his attitude and expressions, together with the affectionate burst of philanthropy—every eye at the instant inadvertently turned to the earth, as though it had suddenly opened its mouth, and he was seen whizzing his downward course, he quickly started back,—as if he had just touched the liquid mass, and felt it too much for *him* to bear for the *moment*, and therefore too much for *them* to endure for *ever*, exclaiming, in an altered tone,—“but, mind ye, I should not like to stop there.” The sensation produced was beyond description, and can only be comprehended in its effects, by adverting to other cases of impressive and stirring eloquence. Nor is there any thing either in the sentiment or the feeling from which it emanated, that is not implied in that extraordinary saying of Moses,—“And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written ;” or the no less remarkable, and philanthropic saying of St. Paul, “I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

Such an instance, too, may lead us more fully to appreciate the real character of Whitfield's preaching,

whose power of painting, in which it is stated consisted the chief magic of his eloquence, enabled him to carry men where he chose, with a touch more powerful than magic. He is said to have annihilated every thing but the scene he would present, and drawing aside the veil of eternity, would now lead his hearers to the opening gate of heaven, and now to the yawning pit of hell. In support of this—though wandering a little from home, we have only to witness its effects on Chesterfield. The sceptic was present when Whitfield presented the votary of sin under the figure of a blind beggar led by a little dog. The dog had broken his string. The blind cripple, with his staff between both hands, groped his way unconscious to a precipice. As he felt along with his staff, it dropped down the descent too deep to send back an echo. He thought it on the ground, and bending forward took one careful step to recover it. But he trod on vacancy, poised for a moment, and as he fell headlong—Chesterfield sprung from his seat exclaiming, “He is gone!” With our collier, the effects—though on a less magnificent scale, were not less extraordinary; accompanied, however, with occasional *acting* as well as *painting*.

The Rev. P. Haswell remarks, in a letter to the writer, “We held a prayer-meeting after preaching one evening, at Carville. Friend Crister was one who engaged in the duty, and interceded with God on the behalf of the families of the parents present on the occasion. Some of his expressions impressed my mind too deeply ever to be obliterated. ‘O Lord,’ said he,

‘ save our families and friends. Some of them have long been *wading* up to the ankles in the tears of their parents—and up to the knees through the blood of Christ, to hell!—Lord, stop them!—O Lord, convert them!’ The solicitude of Jesus to save, compared with the anxiety of our parents, that we should be saved, is well maintained—the one being so much greater than the other—up to the *ankles* in *tears*—and up to the *knees* in *blood*!’ ” There is a climax, too, not only as it regards feeling, but expression; first *tears*—and then *blood*;—the tears of *parents*—then the blood of *Christ*.

Some works of darkness were in progress down the pit one day, among the boys and others, in an apartment, where there was no light at the time, and therefore suited to the occasion. Crister heard their blasphemies at a distance, and silently wound his way through the workings to the spot, when he sprung in upon them with a light in his hand, revealing every face, hurriedly exclaiming—as his eyes glared upon them, “ Lads, what are you about?” adding, with the same breath, “ Do you not know, that God Almighty can take the *whick* (the life) out of you in a moment, just like this *candle*”—closing his finger and thumb upon the flame, and extinguishing it; leaving them in an instant in the darkness in which he had found them—an emblem of that “ outer darkness” to which their deeds were hastening them, and a prey to a pit more terrible than the one in which they sported. The light broke in upon them like an unexpected flash of lightning at midnight—their deeds were made

manifest—the rebuke fell like a voice from the invisible world upon the ear—and conscience was left to perform its office upon the scared and detected culprits ; —Crister praying for each, that God would “ deliver his soul,” in the language of Elihu, “ from going down to the” nether “ pit,” that “ his life might see the light.”

“ You rebels,” said he, on another occasion, when some of them were blaspheming the name of God before they left their work, “ are you not aware that if God Almighty were to blast the pit, you would drop into hell in a moment?” Sudden happiness and sudden misery were subjects often dwelling on his mind, and uttered by his lips : and on the latter, the reply of a Cornish miner, to the question of a profane wretch, who was sporting with eternity in the midst of danger, is exceedingly pertinent, and accords with the notion which the miner of the Tyne carried about with him, and laboured to impress upon the human mind. The person in question, while in the act of ascending, being impatient to reach the day, made a remark on the depth of the mine, and suddenly transferred his thoughts from one pit to another—mingling his interrogatories with oaths, and asking, “ How far is it to hell ?” “ I cannot tell,” returned the person who was suspended in the noose with him, “ but if the rope were to break you would be there directly.”

Few persons, deserving of censure or reproof, escaped ; and his manner and language were generally striking. “ Thou thinkest,” said he, to a swearer, who was glorying in his profanity, “ that thou art

very clever : beware, the devil will be getting his *flesh-hook* into thee, and rely upon it, he will give thee a *roasting*." The man was startled by the form of expression employed, and was led to serious reflection.

Though his actions were generally spontaneous, there was a disposition evidently indulged to take persons now and then by surprise. In one of his musing moods, he approached a hewer in the pit one day, and was close behind him dropping these words into his ear—" Will this be the *last day*, think'st thee ?" before he was aware. Turning his view up, and finding it was Crister, he suspended his work, and asked " Is there no trade ?" Crister perceiving him on another track from the one intended, said, " Yes, there is a trade ; but we may not be permitted to see another day." Then, in an equally enigmatical mood, he enquired, " Dost thou think we shall be able to get over ?" " Over where ?" asked the hewer. " Over Jordan," rejoined Crister : adding, with some emotion, and referring to Bunyan's Pilgrim, " I think we shall, if we only have *faith* in the King of the city." He had been dwelling on the case of the Israelites crossing Jordan, and connecting it with his own exit, he was led in the midst of his reverie, to rouse the attention of a fellow-hewer to divine things. It was in this way he would sometimes accost others ; commencing with a brief sentence, whose sense was at first as beclouded as Samson's " riddle," gradually enlarging his boundary to let in more light, till he brought his hearer home to his meaning.

Walking along the " waggon way" one day, he

came up to a person with whom he had some previous acquaintance.

Crister. "What art thou *thinking* about?"

Acquaintance. "Why, I scarcely know."

Crist. "Thou hast *wandered* from God; dost thou think of going *back* to him again?"

Acquaint. "I was *not* thinking about that when you spoke to me, but I *have* thought of it."

Crist. "If thou art *willing* to go back again, I will ask the Lord to take thee *in*."

Acquaint. "I *am* willing."

The last sentence was no sooner uttered than Crister was on his knees; the man followed him; and there he invoked heaven on behalf of the poor returning prodigal, who appeared anxious to return to his father's house.

It was to the relief and salvation of the human soul, that he was constantly directing his energies; and as it was the joy of his heart to find piety in others, so he not only sought to augment it himself, but exhorted the persons to communicate and shine for the benefit of those around. Having occasion to visit the banks of the Wear, he passed a house where he thought he heard the voice of prayer. He paused, and found his ear correct. It was as the voice of melody; and he not only stood in reverence to join in the worship, but laid his ear to the door that he might yield the response to the petitions. He had softly touched the latch, but found all fast. When family worship ceased, the good man of the house unlocked the door, and to his surprize found a stranger on the point of

entering. The streams of Christian affection, which flowed from each of their hearts, were much nearer than the Wear and the Tyne, on whose separate banks they dwelt; and after a passing band-meeting, Crister told him never to lock his door again during the worship of God—to leave it in a state of readiness for any one to push it gently back, who might be disposed to encircle the family altar with him—and to be fearless in his Christian profession before men.

He had the tribute of respect paid him by young converts, which children pay to those who love them; and as a higher compliment can scarcely be conceived, as due to age, so a more lovely picture can scarcely be presented to the eye, than that of a number of children grouping round, and clinging to an old man. The innocence of childhood will attach itself to the innocence of age; and few are better judges than children, of the meek, the gentle, and the amiable. Young converts, and especially the young in years, seemed instinctively to turn to Crister; and in his house they were sure to find an asylum. He sang and prayed with them, and nursed them with the tenderness of a parent; travailing in spirit for them, till Christ was formed in them “the hope of glory.” Many examples of this kind occurred; one, however—as the subject was closely connected with him in death, may be adduced at present.

When Thomas Ellerton—afterwards designated “Little Tom,” and the “Little Old Man,” first became serious, he, like others, fled to this “nursing father.” He was only about twelve years of age;

but he suffered much when under conviction of sin. Bigge's Main was one of Crister's favourite places, and was called by him "the hot bed of Methodism." A prayer-meeting was established there, and the poor little fellow in whose welfare he felt so deep an interest wished to attend it. He seemed to have more faith in *Crister* and in the *place*, than in the Saviour of sinners, and asked the former to accompany him. Crister had some engagements which pressed upon him; but anxious for the boy's happiness, he told him to go on, and he would follow. As the boy paced by the side of W. Mason, he asked, with great simplicity, "Do you think God can pardon me to-night?" He received for reply, "Yes;" and was encouraged to put faith into exercise. A wishful look was cast back every now and then to see whether Crister was on the road, in whose faithful prayers he reposed great confidence. Crister, on the other hand, desirous of giving him all the aid he had in his power, as well as to encourage him by his presence, posted off the moment he was released from his engagement. Just as Crister arrived at the door, the little fellow stepped into Christian liberty, and "*glory*" was the first word that saluted the ear from his lips. Speaking of the case afterwards, Crister said, "I went up to give him a bit of a lift with all the faith I had, in order to help him through the strait gate. He needed all the help he could get, poor thing. But when I got there, the work was done—ready made to my hand, and I had nothing to do but to rejoice." This kind-hearted man could have prayed for the boy

in his own house, as well as at Bigge's Main. But to accommodate his feelings, he laid himself under considerable inconvenience, and after the hard labour of the day, hurried a distance from home; thus complying with the apostolic injunction—"Let them pray over him;" and with a heart teeming with the prayer of one of old, "Deliver him from going down to the pit,"—adding, as a plea,—“I have found a ransom.”

There were few cases, indeed, in the neighbourhood, of persons in a penitential state, for whom he did not agonize in prayer, and to whom he did not minister. A collier, who was convinced of sin under a sermon preached by Mr. W. Dawson, hastened from the pit to a prayer-meeting, without going home to wash himself and change his attire. He knelt, like a piece of animated jet, by the side of Crister and others—the white of the eye, and a tear-channel down either cheek, presenting the only points of native hue. “We had a sad *tue* (work) with him,” said Crister; “we laboured with him about an hour; but he got the blessing at last;—and there was no need for him to tell us,—for we saw it beaming through his black face.”

“He was not only a “nursing father” to the “babe in Christ,” and manifested a general concern for the salvation of sinners, but he directed his attention to particular persons, and made one appeal after another, till they bowed before his importunities and his prayers. Mr. R. having received a female into his service, who was a stranger to vital religion, obliged her to conform to the Christian usages of the

family. She made her boast that she would never become a Methodist. Crister soon found her out, and having been subjected to a few of his appeals, she at length fled from the kitchen to an out-house, on his approach. But before three weeks had elapsed, she yielded to the force of conviction, like the tree to the storm, and entered the class which met in the house, in order to secure that repose of which she had so long lived in a state of destitution.

While thus pursuing sinners by his exhortations and prayers, he once remarked with great tenderness,—“ Aye, if they only knew, poor things, the happiness we enjoy, they would be good too ;” adding, with greater ardour, “ Why, I would lend them mine ;” and then subjoining with his usual acuteness,—“ But then, I should never get it back again ;” thus showing his distrust of human nature, and the high value he fixed upon his religious enjoyments—considering it enough only to taste the happiness of Heaven, in order to induce a person to maintain his hold of the cup of blessing, and sedulously to seek after an increase of the grace of God.

It was not to Carville only that his labours extended. He very often visited Newcastle early on a Sabbath morning, during the summer season, in company with R. Gregory, W. Thompson, Mr. Reay, and others, and held prayer-meetings in the open air, toward the end of Sandgate—one of the lowest and most profligate parts of the town. On one of these occasions, the morning being exceedingly rainy, they held one of their meetings in New Road chapel, having collected

together some of the most abandoned characters, male and female, whom they found strolling in the streets, and upon the minds of some of whom serious impressions were produced. On another occasion, W. Thompson stood up and preached in the street. Just as he was telling the squalid wretches before him—adapting his language to his auditory, that they were “serving a bad master, and, in a short time, would not have a rag of clothes for their backs,” a man—half intoxicated, and belonging to Carville, sallied from the door of a house, and looking at him, said, “Thou art right, Thompson;—thou speakest the truth there, lad.” The good effected in this way was incalculable.”

In the midst of a revival of the work of God, he was rarely otherwise than in his glory—moving about with the briskness and pleasurable feeling of a person prospering in business. On seeing a number of persons, both old and young, brought under a serious concern for the salvation of their souls at Carville, he wept, he prayed, he rejoiced, and felt something of the struggling spirit of an Apostle, when he said, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth, until Christ be formed in you.” The whole valley, which had been filled for some time with little else but “dry bones,” began at length to heave with life. The vision was apparently present with Crister one night, while engaged in a prayer-meeting, and labouring to give expression to the conceptions of his mind on the subject, he became bankrupt in words; to preserve the feeling, however, he rebounded and caught hold

of the circumstances of the times,—praising God for the glorious work he was carrying on, saying, “It was like calling in the old coins and sending out new;”—the coinage of the realm undergoing an actual change at the period, and occasioning general gladness, as is usual, among all ranks of society—every one trying to obtain a sight, and to keep possession of a piece of the first issue.

His accustomed method was, to go from penitent to penitent; and meeting, on one of those occasions, with a person who appeared rather stupid and ill-instructed, he went back and forward to him, filled with restless anxiety for his salvation. No sooner did he visit one, than he was instinctively led back to the person in question; and that which seemed the more singular was, that there was scarcely any perceptible preparatory feeling for pardon. However, all anxiety was amply repaid, for the man entered into Christian liberty, and was living in the fear of God at Byker when the instrument of his happiness died. Another person, who, after having walked in the “narrow way” for a period of five years, but had lost ground in religion, was invited to the “penitent forms,” as they were designated. Crister asked, “What hast thou come here for?” “For something which I have lost,” he returned. “Kneel thee down, then, in a moment,” rejoined Crister, in all the strength of faith, “and in a moment thou shalt receive it.” It was so, for in the very act of kneeling, he obtained the blessing he was again solicitous to secure.

On his Sabbath visits to Newcastle, he generally

found his way to Mr. Nesham's class, and occasionally led it. "You must come down to Carville," said he to Mr. N., "and meet our class some time. The leader will be glad to see you; there are five and twenty members; he stands in the midst of us like a father, and we all look up to him like children. We are as happy as the day is long." This is a pretty picture of a class-meeting, and is just what a leader and his members ought to be to each other. Being asked, on one of these occasions, on his return home, where he had been, and whom he had seen? "At Newcastle," he replied, "and I saw such an one"—naming the person; "he is full of heaven,—as full as an air balloon;" intimating that he would one day mount upward—light as a thing of air—yet full of majesty and grace. A person once observed of Crister himself, that he had "a soul like a thimble;—it was soon filled, and soon emptied." His conceptions, however, far exceeded, in occasional magnificence, the personal criticisms of his friend.

There was much less extravagance in his representations, than those around him were authorized to expect; from the vividness of his imagination and impressions; and he rarely failed to give a distinct picture of the thing itself, not only for the mental eye to repose upon for the moment, but to be hung up in the chambers of the mind—that the by-stander might again and again return to it, and participate in the pleasure at first imparted. In cases where the images were either imperfect, or not sufficiently indelible, they would still appear and vanish in their passage

through the mind, like the figures of a phantasmagoria, awakening half forgotten associations in some, and gratifying the curiosity of others. Many of his sayings and similes have become household things on the banks of the Tyne. To a friend, he observed, when speaking of the malignity and perseverance of Satan,—“ He will pursue the saint with the same temptation for years—to death itself—yes, to the very verge of heaven. And look at him there;—unable to pass the threshold, he lays one hand on the gate-post, to support himself, and stretches forth the other to make a *click* (catch) at the soul just as it slips in before him,—but *bang* goes the door, and snaps his fingers.” While speaking, the action was suited to the subject,—shaking his own hand, after drawing in his arm, and applying his fingers to his lips, as if to sooth the pain, on being suddenly trapped. It is not improbable, that there was a distant reflection in this, of the conduct of St. Paul, in the pursuit of a higher calling, who *followed after*—who *pressed toward*—“ *reaching forth* to those things which were before”—and so throwing himself, as it were, at the last step, upon the prize by a last and vigorous effort of nature; securing, however, what Satan had lost.

The lower part of the New Road Chapel, Newcastle, having been employed as a granary for some years, Crister mourned over what he deemed a desecration of the place, and the depressed state of the work of God that occasioned it. On the dawn of a brighter day, when the entire place was converted to its original use, he exceedingly rejoiced; saying, “ There could

be no prosperity in the midst of the world ; but when the old fusty corn was removed, God began to work. Christians form the church of God ; their hearts are like places of worship ; but before God will take up his constant abode with them, there must be a *clean sweep* ; all the rubbish of sin—all the fusty grain of this world, must be got quit of. We have an example of it in the New Road Chapel. Who but thieves, will become buyers and sellers in the temple ? There is nothing but the whip for them, if the house is again to become a house of prayer."

Some of the young men having been behaving improperly down the pit, as in cases already noticed, and displaying more than usual profligacy, a person standing by, remarked, " That really beats the devil." Crister, who was within hearing, anxious to improve the expression, sharply subjoined, " I would not give a half-penny cabbage for the man that cannot beat the devil." He knew that Satan could only be conquered through grace,—that every Christian possessed grace,—and that little hope could be entertained of the safety of those who were under satanic power. " Who," said he, on another occasion, when endeavouring to dissuade sinners from hastening to ruin,—" Who would go to hell, that can prevent it ? What a poverty-stricken place must that be, which cannot afford so much as a drop of water to wet the tongue of a rich man !" Such was the esteem in which he was held, and the value of his remarks, that the fact of his having uttered them, was like the stamp of royalty upon a coin ; they became sterling, and

found immediate circulation,—and that, too, very often independent of the quality of the metal, and the size of the model. The veriest mites were often received with enthusiasm, and added, like those of the poor widow, to the treasury of those who possessed a trifle, and became a real treasure to those who had none.

CHAPTER V.

Love-feast Addresses--Enlargement of Soul—Caution in Reference to Love-feasts—Preparation for Heaven, under the Similitude of Waiting for a Stage Coach—His Use of Scripture Narrative—Occasional Conduct in Love-feasts and Fellowship-meetings, with additional Cautions—The Recognition of Saints in Heaven—Is a Publisher of Glad-tidings—Summons to Duty—A characteristic Stroke on Preaching—His Love of Christian Ministers—Imposes Silence on false Reasoning—Wild-fire—The Superiority of Deeds to Words—Encouragement to Expectants—Life, a Journey—Sudden Illumination—The ready Reception of a Blessing.

SOME of his *Love-feast* addresses are interspersed throughout the other pages of the work ; but a few of them demand greater prominence, as he was, to employ an expression of his own, “ always at home in a Love-feast.” It was not long after his conversion to God, before he became distinguished on those festal occasions, and among some of his earlier essays, when attending one at North Shields, about 1815, he observed, “ I was up this morning at four o’clock, praying to God for a good love-feast to-day ; and aye, friends, he filled me so full of love, that I could scarcely contain myself. A thought struck me—Why, when religion prospers among a people, they immediately set to work to raise a chapel ; and, on finding the good cause on the increase, the next thing they do is, to erect a gallery for the accommodation

of the hearers. O, I thought, while God was blessing me this morning, what a still greater blessing it would be, if he were not only to enlarge my heart, but build a *gallery* in it, for the accommodation of himself—for still greater degrees of divine love.” Religious characters may not unfrequently have been thrown in the way of that phrase—“ Lord, withhold thy hand, or enlarge the *vessel* !” but this is perhaps the first instance of a “ *gallery*” being presented to their observation. And yet, at first sight,—a mere conceit as it may seem, it is in perfect keeping with the language of inspiration, where the apostle asks—“ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you ?” stating elsewhere,—“ Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” It was not a “ *vessel*”—such as might be taken in the hand, that could at all comport with the enlarged conceptions of this child of the mine, whose thoughts—while his hands were engaged with the coal, were as frequently and closely employed in mining among the gold and the diamonds of every thing excellent in nature and religion ;—no, he reposed on something more capacious ; he proceeded to the magnificent temple—not only galleried at the end, but from side to side—pew added to pew, and seat rising beyond seat—towering, ample, and full—affording at once a fit emblem of the capabilities of the human soul, in its endless progress in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, and of the infinite goodness of God,

from whose "fulness" the Christian receives "grace for grace," or, in other words, grace after grace—blessing added to blessing—one blessing upon another. On one occasion, he was so completely overpowered with the joys of religion, that he exclaimed, "Withhold thy hand, Lord, or the vessel will burst." "You should have prayed for an *enlargement* of the vessel," said the late Mr. Bramwell, who was standing by at the time.

It is not surprising that his presence should be courted on such occasions; and accordingly, we find him sent for from Edmondbyers, Hexham, Morpeth, Alston, and other places,—a practice, by the way, which is not to be recommended. But he was a kind of human magnet, whose presence drew others to the spot; and many have afterwards expressed the benefit they have derived from his experience, as embodied in his addresses, and from his prayers. In ninety cases out of every hundred, such invitations might not only be injurious in their effects to the individual himself, but would be sure to destroy the influence of God upon the meeting—leading to certain preparations and exhibitions, which would terminate in self-inflation, embarrassment, or something worse. A love-feast is chiefly for the *society* in the *place*; and the speaking there should be the spontaneous overflowings of the soul: hence it is, that almost every society has its love-feast; and finer strokes of native eloquence have been heard in those meetings, than are frequently found to grace the pulpit. In Crister's case—if allowed at all, it must be admitted as an

exception; and no particular evil resulted from the various invitations received. He looked upon invitations as mere tokens of Christian friendship, and speaking followed as a thing of course, from the circumstance of his being present. He diffused, nevertheless, unusual life, and with it a fine religious feeling through a meeting, the whole of which he referred to God, without whom there is nothing wise, nothing holy, nothing good.

When at Alston, he heard of an aged saint who had travelled the "good old way" for a period of sixty years, during the whole of which time she had exemplified the morality and religion of Jesus in her life, temper, and conversation. She was unable to stir abroad; but Crister, though limited for time, and out of his way, would not leave the neighbourhood without visiting her cottage of contentment, thus showing his love to the venerable pilgrim. He was delighted with his visit, and she was overjoyed with his remarks, his spirit, and his prayer. He styled her on his return home, "a real curiosity." This little circumstance, insignificant in itself, shows that his heart was where it ought to be, and as it ought to be—ready to receive, and to import good.

In the course of one of his love-feast journies, his patience was a little put to the test. On his first visit to Edmondbyers, he was accompanied by Mr. Jos. R. Wilson, who had borrowed a gig and horse for the occasion. Crister was a stranger to the whip and the rein; and Mr. W., who took the command of both, had all his skill called into exercise by the temper and

tricks of the horse, which was small in size, and reported to have had his first training among some gipsies in the neighbourhood of Hexham. On coming to a steep hill the animal became restive; and while whipping, and coaxing, and patting, and backing, and sidling, were alternately tried, a neighbouring curate honoured the poor collier and his companion, with his presence, his counsel, and his aid. After much trouble, they again got the vehicle in motion. On coming, however, to a farm house, which fortunately happened to be the residence of a friend, the animal again became restive, and resolutely stood to his purpose. The good friend made his appearance; and seeing the circumstances in which they were placed, proposed to yoke a large dray-horse as a leader, stating, in pleasantry, that if the gig-poney would not draw, the horse was sufficiently powerful to draw both him and the gig, with the guests to boot. Time was short, and the period for being at Edmondbyers was fixed. Poor Crister, in his simplicity, concluded the horse to be under Satanic influence, stating that the devil had done it, to prevent them getting to the love-feast. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, attributed it—as was natural in an instructor of youth, to *education*, with the addition of a probable want of provender. The result was, the poney was taken out of the shafts, and introduced to the manger; and with a view to expedite the journey, Mr. B.'s horse was brought out, which, compared with the other, was more fit for a waggon, than for a gig. The gig having been shaped for a poney rather than a horse, the shafts

were expanded to admit the huge animal within their embrace. All being ready, the travellers again proceeded, the horse and the gig forming a perfect contrast;—the one lightly dancing over the stones, and the other moving on with the ponderosity of an elephant. The good people of Edmondbyers were on the look out, and were not a little surprised to find visitors drawn in such style. Crister was a good deal chafed in spirit with it; but prayer and the love-feast soon restored the mind to its wonted tone.

Though there are many eyes and ears open in a love-feast, the presence of the people seemed to weigh but little with him compared with the presence of God; nor was he aware, apparently, of the power of his own language and thoughts upon others, or that any thing that he said would live beyond the hour, or be felt beyond the occasion. The truth is, he was *one* in every place, and in that place, *one* with God. In a love-feast in one of the chapels on the banks of the Tyne, and not long before his demise, he observed, “When persons are about to take a journey, they go to the coach-office the day before, and are off with their luggage early next morning to the place of starting—waiting, and in readiness;” and then exclaimed, with his accustomed cheerfulness; “Thank the Lord, I am *packed up*, and ready!—just like a person thus waiting for the coach. It will not do for a man to be *preparing* for his *journey*, when the *coach* is at the *door*; or to be *looking* in *another direction*, while *passing*. In the first instance, the *coachman* is *timed*, and *cannot wait* for him; and in the second, the

coach may have *passed*—be *gone*—and quite *out of sight* ; rendering it impossible for him to *overtake* it. And then, what is the consequence ? The journey is *delayed*—the next coach may be *full*—and the *only chance* of securing the *object* of the journey is perhaps lost for ever ! O, friends, let us be on the *look out*—*ready* at a *moment's notice*—waiting with patience till our change come—till Jesus shall come with his chariot to bear us away from earth !” This is as accordant with the general sentiment of Scripture, on the brief and precarious stay of man in this world, as some of the preceding imagery is agreeable to our notions of progressive improvement in the divine life ; nor is the language itself out of character. It will furnish an admirable precursor to the “chariot of fire, and horses of fire,” passing, as it were, between heaven and earth, and which conveyed the perfected spirit of the prophet to the land of light and glory ;—an incident in the closing moments of the Seer, beautifully expressed by the bard of Sheffield :—

“Elijah, with his mantle, smote the flood,
And Jordan's hastening waves divided stood ;
The fiery chariot on the further shore,
Deathless to heaven the ascending prophet bore
'My father !' cried Elisha, as he flew ;
'Lo ! Israel's chariot and his horsemen too :'
Then with the mantle, as it dropp'd behind,
Came down a power like mighty rushing wind,
And as he wrapt the trophy round his breast,
Elijah's spirit Elisha's soul possess'd.”

As it was through the effect of *fire*, as will be seen in

the sequel, that the subject of the present remarks fell ; so it will also be perceived, that, as he—in his own expressive language, “ was packed up and ready,” he only fell to rise—rise with “ the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”

In the same chapel—Byker, at another of those religious festivals, he arose with “ Glory” on his lips, saying, “ Glory be to God for what he is doing at Carville ! He is reviving his work, he is saving souls, especially in the Women’s Prayer-Meeting ; he saved one this morning :” then, after relating the dealings of God with his soul, he turned towards a person in the opposite part of the chapel, and said, with homeliness and familiarity, “ George, get up, man, and get it over.” George modestly arose at his bidding, and with a heart filled with joy, and the tears streaming down his face, he told those around him, that, in the anguish of his soul, he had ventured into the “ Women’s Prayer Meeting,” and that he had there received a sense of God’s pardoning love ; giving, in the detail, a scriptural account of his conversion.—Crister, and a few pious persons around him, being the subjects of sweet devotional feeling in the body of one of the chapels, on a similar occasion, a simple-hearted man noticed it in the gallery ; when the former responded,—“ Fire always burns best at the bottom ;” referring not only to the simple fact, but carrying his thoughts a little further, by intimating, that those who were desirous of fire from heaven in all its intensity, must *come down*—be *below* in mind—lie low in the dust. There was often a meaning beyond the first that presented

itself in his sayings ; and his expressions served as texts for others to work out, yet, on his own part, perfectly unpremeditated.

Crister was exceedingly ready in laying hold of Scripture incidents and narratives, on public occasions, and making them subserve the devout purposes of his mind, in reference to others. Having read the affecting account of "Ananias and Sapphira his wife," he entered a fellowship-meeting warm from the subject, and took it up in the course of his own experimental narration. "This man and woman," said he, "had sold their possessions, and proposed to have all things in common with others. They had attended a few meetings,—got their hearts touched,—and resolved to lay the produce of the sale 'at the Apostles' feet.' But not being well grounded in religion, or only having a bit of something which they called religion, they no sooner left the meeting than the world entered into their hearts again. Part of that which they had promised to God, they resolved to keep back ; and when Ananias went to the meeting with a view to pay the money, Peter found him short in his accounts, and charged him with being brim-full of the devil and of the world, and with lying to the Holy Ghost. He had lost the bit of religion he had,—if he ever had any. Peter told him plainly, that the property was his own—in his own power—to do with what he liked, before it was sold ; but that, in changing his purpose, he had 'not lied unto men, but unto God.' He was, therefore,—in order to strike terror into the hearts of others, smitten with instant death. His

wife, not knowing what had been done, and being a good bit behind her time, came into the meeting, as if nothing were the matter. But Peter was in the secret; and was aware, that she was not only 'privy to it,' but had leagued with him to deceive and to forge lies: and the very feet of those who had buried her husband, she was told, were at the door, to carry her out to the grave. What was the consequence? 'Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.' It is an awful thing, friends," continued he, "to keep any thing back from God; and still worse to tell lies about it. We were all promised to God in our baptism, and we have often promised to give our hearts to him since then, but we have kept back part, if not the whole. Here, blessed be the Lord, we may have all things in common,—for we may all be holy and happy." Then, with one of his quick turns, he exclaimed—"All who are happy and resolved to give their hearts to God—*stand up*." This was sudden, and unexpected; and two gay young persons who had been admitted into the meeting, were scarcely prepared for the test. Crister perceiving this, and with a view to deepen conviction, and effectually to sever the sincere from the trifler, proceeded—"I ask it, in the name of the Lord, and charge you not—even in *action*, 'to lie to the Holy Chost.' Recollect the case of Annanias and Sapphira!" One of the females alluded to, somewhat affected, made a trembling essay to rise, while the other, as much afraid of appearing singular, by sitting alone, as she was unprepared to make a free surrender of herself to

God, continued to hold her by her attire, in order to prevent her. Without attempting to justify those little advantages taken of human feeling, and which often hurry people into resolutions they are unprepared to fulfil, the conflict was strong in the present case; the call, coupled with the name of the Lord, was like a summons from Heaven; and the frightful end of the persons struck dead, for withholding that from the Church which was of less moment, than that of withholding themselves from Him who says—“*Give me thy heart,*” operated so powerfully upon them, that a visible profession was the result. They stood confused, and pale with fear, while others exulted in the God of their salvation.

Another example of this kind occurred at a fellowship meeting at Carville. Crister directed his way to the singing pew, at the moment a hallowed influence was felt by the people, and cautioned any against leaving the chapel, who were solicitous of the divine favour without securing it. All who were penitent were requested to stand up; some hesitated: but fifteen persons pressed towards the singing pew, and several entered into Christian liberty.

From the effect produced by the case of Annanias, at Brandling Place, he was requested to give it—being denominated his “great gun,” on another occasion. He did so, but in point of effect, there was a woful failure; and when the two instances were named to him afterwards, he had the piety and good sense to remark,—“God put it into my mind at the one place, but man asked for it at the other; and God helped me

in his own work, in a way that man could not do !” This shows that he was not a mere *tool* in the hands of others for the purpose of “ getting up,” so to speak, a kind of religious exhibition. When left to himself, he was free, powerful, and often highly imaginative—simply attending to the dictates of the Spirit in his heart, as to matter—and to the more simple dictates of nature, as to manner : and this is the way to keep the work in the hand of God, without the imprudent interference of man. In preaching, it is very different : a certain preparation is necessary for the pulpit, which would scarcely comport with the cheerful warblings and overflowings of spirit in meetings for Christian communion, where one heart is tuned to another—where all is harmony and melody, and yet there is nothing like “ set music” expected. And Crister himself could say, to Mr. R. S. Stanley, whom he had heard preach some time before, and who had cited a piece from the Emblems of Quarles, “ Now, bless you, let us have Justice, Mercy, and Jesus to-day ;” a sign this, that he was “ not a forgetful hearer.”

With an air of Christian cheerfulness, when once in a love-feast at Fawdon, he looked round upon the people, and being in a situation where he could see nearly the whole, he said, “ Let me look at your faces ; I should like us to know each other, when we reach Heaven ; and it appears to me, if we feel and pray as we do now, we really *shall* get there. We must walk in the way, if we wish to gain the end.” The possibility, nay—the probability, of saints upon earth knowing each other in Heaven, was often the subject

of delightful anticipation with Crister: and certainly the advocates of cognition rather than recognition, have less evidence to support their sentiments than the latter. There was cognition in the case of Peter on the Mount, when he realized the persons of "Moses and Elias;" but having seen and known them there, it would not be difficult to recognise them in Heaven. But there are numerous inferential intimations to be collected on the subject in the sacred pages. Who was it that told Adam, that Eve was to be his wife, when she was introduced to his presence? Who was it that informed the rich man, in the profound depths of hell, that yonder personage—changed in appearance and glorified, in the heights of Heaven, was Lazarus, who recently lay at his gates? To say, that this is *parable*, alters not the question; for while *history* shows what *has* been, *parable* shows what *may* be; and hence the *probability* of recognition. Look there upon Saul, with a foul old beldam for his companion, and his person completely *disguised*! Who is it—thus accompanied and thus disfigured, that informs Samuel, it is the Jewish monarch who appears in his presence? Should such knowledge be referred to God in one case, we have only to refer it to Him in another, with a view to obviate the same difficulties. But who is to inform St. Paul at the last day, that such and such persons in the immense crowds placed before him, have been brought to a knowledge of the truth through his ministry? They are to be his crown of rejoicing in Heaven. But *knowledge*

must form the basis of his *joy* ; he must know them, previously to his rejoicing in them.

Crister was not a man that busied himself in other people's concerns. His conversation was emphatically religious. When he heard of the extension of the work of God in any particular place, he assumed the character of a messenger of glad tidings ; and like a courier, would have communicated it from post to post ; sometimes, when passing the house of a friend in haste, either naming it in the door-way, or, in louder accents, sending it through the window, with his face against the glass. It was only with his most intimate friends, however, that he would presume on the latter, and when hastening home from the pit in his working habiliments, unwilling that they should remain longer without knowing what would yield as much delight to them as to himself.

Nor were his calls to duty less frequent. In a morning, when going to the pit, at two o'clock, he has been known to knock at the door of his friend R. G., and with the knock, to say, " Come, Robin, my lad, get up and go to prayer." This would have been annoying to many, but Crister knew that Robin loved to hear the voice of prayer. Being connected too, in the pit—as is often the case, with an irreligious character, he, in addition to private addresses and rebukes, went to the house of the man one morning about half an hour before the time of setting off to work. The man was a little suspicious of his design, from the tone of his conversation, and various movements,

that he wished to propose prayer; and to be beforehand with him, he said, just as they were ready to go—"Let us pray:" accordingly, the man engaged first, and Crister next. A certain preparation had been in progress in the mind of the man, unknown to Crister, and he was ready for the exercise, in which they often afterwards engaged.

Conversing with a friend one day, on religious subjects, he drew a little closer to him, and in a kind of half whisper, said, "Let us take care what we say,—there is a *preacher* standing close by us." His companion, as heedless as he was unsuspecting of any one near, turned round, and saw a *cock* standing by his side. "That," subjoined Crister, "was one of *Peter's* Preachers." This was admonitory, and told the friend, who required the caution, to be *watchful*.

When, in his remarks, he was led to make an observation or two upon character or office, he was generally pointed—often instructive—and almost invariably on the side of candour. Speaking of a preacher, he said, "His preaching is just like a *snowy day*; it does not only fall *soft*, but *searches*, and finds its way through every *crevice*; it hits all—it misses nothing." Of another, he said, "He has a large body. May the Lord grant him an enlarged soul! and may the whole soul be thrown into God's work; and in that work may both be worn out!"

On a preacher being appointed to the circuit, he manifested the anxiety of a person expecting a relative or absent friend, to obtain the first glance of him; and as his patience rarely held out till he appeared before

the congregation, he would make repeated calls at the house of Mr. Reay, enquiring—"Has he come yet?" On his arrival, he was certain of a welcome from Crister. After the usual salutation, he asked a young preacher, with his wonted ardour, and a degree of abruptness, "What do you preach for?" Perceiving him a little at a loss for an answer, in consequence of not fully comprehending his meaning—"Do you preach for souls?" he subjoined. The manner, as well as the time, of proposing such a question, would have carried with it an air of impertinence, from the lips of many other men; but from Crister—to those who knew him, it was a question of solicitude for the prosperity of the church; and as he entertained the highest opinion of the preachers, he expected an answer only in the affirmative.

With a view to suppress all false reasoning, and to inspire genuine confidence in God, he adverted to the case of the disciples, when on the coasts opposite to Dalmanutha, without the persons to whom he was speaking being aware of his design. He graphically represented "the twelve" in social discourse with each other, and expressing, in the temporary absence of their Master, their doubts and fears respecting Him, together with His works, with great freedom. Just at the moment they were beginning to warm, as "they reasoned among themselves," Jesus unexpectedly appeared in the midst of them, abruptly, and pointedly asking, while fixing his rebuking eye upon each, "O ye of little faith! why reason ye among yourselves?"—"What a *mazer*," said Crister,

flashing his own reproving eye upon those for whom he intended it,—“What a *mazer* * that would be for the disciples ! Why, they would scarcely know where to put their heads ! They would be quite ashamed of themselves.” Connected with this, was a practical improvement ;—that our Lord is unchangeable in His goodness and power—what he once did he can still do—men should reason less, and believe more—the Divine eye is upon us in every place, and the Divine ear is open to our remarks.

“Wild fire !” he exclaimed one day : “I have had the fire of heaven burning on the altar of my heart, for the last twenty years. People may call it what they like ; it keeps me warm and comfortable, and I am resolved to keep up the flame.” He knew, that as the fire in the Jewish temple was never permitted to become extinct, but was fed by night and by day ; so in the human temple, the fire of Divine love, of which the other was an emblem, was never designed to be otherwise than bright and animating. “People,” said he, on the same subject, “talk about not being able to get through their work. There is nothing like the love of God for this. I can get through twice as much with it, as without it. It bears the mind with cheerfulness above it, and inspires the body with fresh energy to do it.” He knew as well the difference between heavenly and “strange fire,” as he did between natural heat and an artificial flame ; and while others “baked bread upon the coals” of the idols they

* How it would *surprise* and *confound* !

had made, as in the days of Isaiah, he only would receive the bread which cometh down from heaven, as he was resolved to live under the animating influence of its genuine fires. As the "living creatures," therefore, of Ezekiel, the "appearance" of Christians in his estimation, was to be that of "burning coals of fire."

Showing the best way of settling a disputed point, where the case would admit of it, by a reference to *deeds* rather than *words*, he adverted to the case of John Baptist, who sent his disciples to Jesus, enquiring, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—"Here," said the domestic expositor, instead of answering them in so many words, our Lord immediately set to work to perform a few more miracles, and in these he said, 'Go, and show John again those things which YE do *hear* and *see*: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.' " Then, comprehended in a single remark or two, followed a pointed improvement or application: and although he might not in every instance be in critical accordance with the context, yet it is remarkable to find, how—unaided by note or comment, correct his views in general were, and with what aptitude and readiness he could elucidate and apply the sacred text on particular occasions.

One fine trait in his character was, that, on giving offence to any one—though unintentional on his part,

he was never satisfied till amity was restored ; in order to which, he employed every mean in his power to gain access to the offended—generally terminating the unpleasant feeling in the house of the latter. The moment of ingress having arrived, he would seat himself in the family circle—relate some pleasant anecdote, pointed with a good moral—proceed to what he had recently heard, seen, and enjoyed—and finding the hostile feelings turned down, he would propose prayer—that which puts all right, when rightly employed—and would then, without adverting to the old grievance, shake hands with the family, give them his blessing, and depart. The way was thus prepared for future intercourse.

Speaking of the means of grace, and his own expectations in them, he surprised his friends into his views and feelings, by taking them in imagination to Jerusalem, and placing them before “ the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful.” “ See,” said he, “ ‘ a man, lame from his mother’s womb.’ Thither he had been carried, and there he is ‘ laid daily.’ Ask him, poor thing,—‘ Do you expect to get any thing to-day ? while sitting there, begging *alms*.’ His answer is, ‘ To be sure I do, otherwise I should never have left home.’ Now, like the beggar at the Beautiful gate, I never go out without *expecting* to receive something ; and when I go ‘ into the temple at the hour of prayer,’ like ‘ Peter and John,’ I never wait there any length of time without *receiving*. I go expecting—I continue asking—and I never come away disappointed.”

Life was a *journey* ; and while he secured a proper supply of provision to support him on the road, he would say, with great earnestness and resolution, “ I am determined, by the help of God, to be at the *end*.” —Life was a *race* ; and with equal ardour, he would exclaim, “ No man shall have my *crown* ; I am resolved to wear my own ; it will fit me best.” He saw the goal at the end of the race, and the crown suspended over it. He took the goal on his way to the crown. He aimed at the “ mark ” of holiness, that he might secure the “ prize of heaven,” and in order to effect his purpose, he pursued his object with ardour, exclaiming with the apostle, “ This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

He had been at Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle, on the first introduction of the gas into it ; and being at a season of the year, when a dim glow was scarcely perceptible to a person who knew the gas to be partially on, at the commencement of the service, and still less so to one not looking for it, he sat in the crowd insensible to every external object, except the preacher. The shades of the evening continuing to deepen, the features of the preacher began at length to disappear : just at the moment a deep venerable gloom overshadowed the whole interior, the person who had the management of the gas, turned the tap, and in the twinkling of an eye filled the place with a body of pure, intense, and soft light, from so many

distinct flames, the most liquid in their appearance, and the least offensive to human vision. It operated on Crister like the transfiguration upon the apostles, who, in all probability, closed their eyes beneath the "raven wing of night," and in the midst of its darkness and stillness, unexpectedly opened them in the centre of a full blaze of glory—glory increased in its intensity by the gloom which preceded, and the "blackness of darkness" which still lay beyond. Being in a sweet frame of mind, he seemed to have sprung into the regions of light, without once touching "the valley of the shadow of death" between. "O," said he, in his warmth and simplicity afterwards, "it was like the sudden illumination of a human mind by the Spirit of God; and aye, when God turns the tap, and says, 'Let there be light,' darkness disappears in an instant." It comported well with his notions of an instantaneous work, and with a body and mind formed for action. With this, too, he was not only more deeply impressed, but sooner attracted.

Passing along one of the streets in Newcastle, he made a momentary pause, to look at the unloading of a cart before the door of a cheesemonger. "I watched the men," said he: "one was in the cart, and the other was in the door-way. He that was in the cart threw one cheese after another, as fast as he could; and the man in the door-way was always ready to receive them; he never once missed. You would have been astonished, if you had seen him,—he did it with such *ease*, and *confidence*, and *readiness*. I thought at the time, why, this is just like *faith* and *works* in the

reception and use of gospel blessings. God has plenty to give ; we should stand in the way, and be ready to receive ; nay, we should be in a state of expectation for the coming blessing ; and believing that it is intended for us, we should lay hold of it with confidence, and then hand it to others. Aye, I should like to be a good kepper ; just ready to catch the blessings as they come, while the Lord, in his bounty, is dealing them out.—While employing the provincialisms of *kep*, *kepping*, and a *kepper*, he conveyed the notion at the same time of a person playing with balls, fully confident in his dexterity and skill, throwing them up, and catching them in their fall,—several of them, and for a given period, without missing one ; only in his association of the *men* and the *cheese*, there was more of *duty* than *sport*,—something more *substantially useful* than *balls*,—something in the shape of a Stilton or a double Glo'ster,—or from the less remote dairies of Cheshire.

CHAPTER VI.

Progress in Piety—Active Christianity—His usual Place of Retirement—Answers to Prayer—Prays for the Preachers—Conversions—He is not to be taken in all Things as a Model—Personalities—His Theology—His Exemption from Frivolity—A Peculiarity in his Conceptions—His Conduct under severe providential Dispensations—Personal Affliction—Attempts to do Good in a pecuniary Way—His Benevolence of Character—Grateful Acknowledgments—He aids a poor Widow—Grateful Feeling—A Love-feast.

BEING always on the alert himself in matters of religion, he was a perpetual spur to the indifference of others. “Never,” he would say, “be on the same ground to-day, you were upon yesterday.” He was like a bird on the wing, and he would suffer no one around him, over whom he had the least influence, to slumber longer on the perch than what was necessary; nor yet be idle, when awake. He was desirous to see all the followers of Jesus united in pulling along the ark of Christianity. On retiring from a meeting, in which many prayers had been offered up for the success of the gospel, and walking by the side of one of the local preachers, who had not exercised his gift on the occasion, he said, looking at him with a rebuking eye, “Thou hast not made a splash to-day, but thou knowest that thou shouldst have put out thine ear, and given a few good strokes.”

On his children annoying him in moments of

communion with God, and yet being engaged in such little amusements, as to render reproof and correction unnecessary, he would take up the key of the chapel, which place was nearly next to his own door, and would there lock himself in, and enjoy—undisturbed, the presence of his Maker in his own sanctuary.

His partiality to prayer, and the frequent peculiarity of his manner, are subjects alluded to elsewhere ; but as tests of his sincerity in the exercise of the duty, and of the strength of his faith in his pleadings, we must look to the issue.

When Mr. Reay, his class-leader, met with a severe accident in the pit, by a fall of stone from the roof, and from the effects of which there was not the most distant hope of ultimate recovery entertained by his medical attendants—the marvel being, after the crushing and breaking of bones, that he survived at all, Crister was deeply distressed. Till about the eighth or tenth day, all were in despair except Crister, who was about six days in advance of the whole with his faith and hope. Many were his wrestlings with God on the behalf of his leader and his friend ; and on the third day after the accident, he came to Mrs. Reay, who was unable to pierce the cloud, with the animated looks and expression of a person who had discovered some hidden treasure, exclaiming, “ The Master will get better ! ” Mrs. R. enquired, “ Why do you say so ? ” “ I have just been praying,” he returned, “ and the Lord has shown me, that he will go to chapel again with an *up* and a *down* ; ” meaning that he would recover, and go *halting* to the house of God.

And such was the fact ; for as “ the sun rose upon ” Jacob after the angel of the Lord “ touched ” him, and as he was enabled, through the good hand of God upon him, after “ the sinew shrank,” to “ pass over Penuel,” though “ he halted on his thigh ;” so the same sun shone on Mr. Reay, who passed from his house to the chapel, and though “ with an up and a down,” walked before Crister—pursuing the avocations of life, five years after the afflicting event, and was left to walk before others, after Crister’s own decease. As the revelation of his recovery was first made to this good man, and made in the exercise of prayer, Christianity warrants us to admit the probability of his restoration being in answer to the devout breathings of his soul to Heaven, in connexion with the prayers of others. When Mrs. R. was seriously indisposed, his prayers were also offered up for her ; and one of the sentences, as striking for the alliteration, as it was distinguished for the fervour with which it was uttered—“ Lord, give her health or heaven,” is worthy of record. She had the former, and was on the way to the latter.

On a Sabbath morning, Crister had been up early, as wont, and he was soon joined by a few friends, who united with him in prayer for the preacher for the day. One of the local preachers, who was planned for Carville, attended to his appointments. He had fixed on his texts, and made such preparation for addressing his auditories, as comported with the ability he possessed. The afternoon service passed off as previously intended ; but the mind became unsettled with

regard to the evening, in consequence of the text and subject selected, becoming matters of perplexity. He opened his mind to a friend, who wisely and religiously advised him to yield to the impressions respecting any other subject that might be proposed, and with which he might be impressed—a little suspicious, perhaps, lest the stirrings of vanity should be in it. He took the advice—retired after tea—when a text which had occurred was sought for, and with some difficulty found. He took it up, without seeing his way clearly into it, and without being entirely free from some distracting preferences with regard to the one previously fixed upon. Here he stood, as between two parties—one pulling in one direction, and the other in another, with the argument of *preparation* on the one hand, and that of *impression* on the other—the natural texture of his mind giving its voice in favour of the former. He went to chapel, and remained undecided, till nearly the close of the second hymn, when he threw himself upon the text at a venture, with such materials as he could abstract from other subjects, and dove-tail into the passage, praying for still further light into it. The enlargement which he experienced was remarked by his hearers—a circumstance apparently of rare occurrence in his case ; while to himself, he seemed to be a mere *machine* in the hand of God, who was employing him for his own purposes, without the power to guide, or having the credit of being master of his own thoughts. The only key to this is, the *conversion* of *five persons* under the evening sermon—a proof, too, that God will occasionally step out of his common track in

eminently honouring instruments the most unlikely ; and how far, in the mysterious proceedings of God—whom we cannot suppose to have deserted the Christian pulpit, the prayers of Crister and his friends influenced the case, eternity alone will reveal. It will be admitted, at all events, that if there was more prayer for the success of preachers, and less *said* on the subject of their separate qualifications—an evil to which the preacher himself was prone, both the church and the world would profit more by their discourses.

Some time after this, Crister, who clung to the preachers of the gospel like a child to his nurse, set one of them, in company with some other friends, on part of his road home through the fields. It was when the days were short : the night was cold and dark ; the foot-path was little more than dimly visible ; but before this devotional spirited man could leave the person who had been feeding him with the bread of life, he would have a prayer-meeting ; and, accordingly, at the point of parting, in the open air, he turned his face to the stars twinkling through the azure vault above, as Daniel turned his face to Jerusalem, and implored the blessing of heaven upon each of the party, but especially on him who had thus been ministering to them—praying that he might be still more abundantly useful in promoting the salvation of souls. This was not a solitary case. He has been known to pause in the middle of a turnpike road, whether in the dark or in the light, to pray aloud on

parting with a friend, and to request that friend to pray with him for a mutual blessing. These brief, and apparently erratic movements, were like so many safety valves for the purpose of letting off his effervescing feeling. By a lady, like Mrs. Trollope, who, in her book on America, has given a ludicrous caricature of the Methodists in the west of the United States, such conduct would scarcely be deemed decorous : but Crister recollected the "*river side*" prayer-meeting at "Philippi," of which another example still awaits the reader. Not only so, but he knew, that Elijah's cave, David's depths, Jeremiah's dungeon, Daniel's den, and Jonah's fish, were all consecrated by prayer, and became places of worship, for the time being, to their several proprietors. The old Duke of Bedford was accustomed to say, "I consider the prayers of God's ministers and people as the best walls round my house." On the same principle, they the best fence around a field. The place where prayer is offered up, becomes "holy ground;" and in no place is it unacceptable to the Divine Being, when the worshipper is sincere—except in hell, which shews not only the madness of deferring it, but the propriety of its constant exercise. Wherefore, said Jesus, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

He made it a constant point to pray for the preacher whom he was going to hear. "O, Lord," said he, in reference to one, "grant that the moment thy servant places his foot on the pulpit stairs, he may rise a step into thee! With the second, may he rise

another step into thee ! And thus, may he continue to rise, step after step, till he reach the top !” The excellent man, who heard him pray, before he went to chapel, could not but advert to the petitions which had thus gone to heaven before he entered ; and as he ascended the sacred stand, he could not but feel their influence. The substance of a petition like this, for a Christian minister, is no more than what the psalmist prayed for on the behalf of the multitude, when, with holy ardour, he said—“ Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance ; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

Nor were his prayers confined to those by whom he was immediately benefitted and surrounded. For a friend many miles distant, he broke out in the middle of prayer, when in a family, naming him—“ O, bless him. Thou knowest, Lord, that Satan has been long anxious for his death ; but disappoint him ; spare the useful life of thy servant yet longer ; and let him still be made the successful instrument of thinning the black ranks of hell !” Friendship,—like all friendship founded on Christian principle, had no blank in him ; it lived in his affections, whether in the presence or the absence of its object.

When he was in company with persons who partook in some measure of his own spirit and views, and shared in the liveliness of his own fancy, it was dangerous for gravity to be near. He was praying in the house of a friend on a Saturday evening, and being desirous that Mr. C., who knelt by his side, should be in the spirit on the Lord’s day, he abruptly

turned his face towards him, and asked in a hurried manner, as if hemming in a parenthesis to the prayer—"Where will you be to-morrow?" Mr. C., with equal quickness, returned, "If you had been *inspired*, you would have *known* that!" Crister, not in the least disconcerted, and as if there had been no pause in the petitions, instantly turned his thoughts to the *inspirations* of the Holy Ghost, without which the word is but a "dead letter," and the minister himself a "tinkling cymbal," and prayed most fervently, that both preacher and people—in whatsoever part of the vineyard the former might be appointed to labour, might be inspired from above. Happily, he had but few imitators in these outbursts. They were tolerated in himself; but in another, they had been as insufferable, as they would have appeared unnatural. It is one of those evils which seems to be left as an entail upon imitators,—that where there is an imperfection in a person admired or loved, the imperfection is next to certain to be adopted, and to appear most conspicuous as a graft. It almost invariably grows out like an unseemly excrescence on the rind of a tree.

It was not only with others, that he would have indulged in these occasional aberrations, which are noticed by way of introducing the reader to real character, and which can only be viewed as imperfections, but he would sometimes soliloquise for a few sentences in the midst of a prayer, giving question and answer, as in a regular conversation, without the slightest apparent chasm, or any diminution of devotional feeling. Thus, after having been praying a short time, and

recollecting that he was surrounded by those, with whom he had often conversed on religious topics, and for whose salvation he had often prayed, he said; "O Lord, there are a number of people of whom no one knows what to make. We say to them, 'when are you going to class?' They say, 'soon!' But *soon* never comes. This man beside me"—a person of whom he had a pretty correct knowledge, "is perhaps saying, 'Crister means me.' Yes—I am going to be very plain; I do mean him." Then, in an instant, and with the utmost fervour, he prayed for individual salvation. Though charity forbids a classification of these things with "spots" in ancient "feasts," she does not—while exhorting the "strong to bear the infirmities of the weak," allow us either to countenance, encourage, or glory in such freedoms, while kneeling at a throne of grace.

His personalities were not at all of a malignant character, let out upon objects of aversion, in order to gratify hostile feeling, or punish previous indiscretion; but invariably indulged with an eye to the person's benefit—to humble, instruct, or otherwise improve. A man who had been a few weeks in the service of God, and who had previously led a very dissolute life--carrying in all probability some indications of long indulged habits, observing in the commencement of his experience, in a social meeting, "I have been a great sinner:" Crister, who sat directly opposite to him, and as if to rivet the sentence by affirming his faith in it, said, looking at him with an eye of pity, "Aye, thou look'st like it." This, in him, was the pure language of tenderness, to a

being over whom he could weep, and for whom he prayed.

He was rarely otherwise than instructive, whether he prayed or discoursed; and in the latter case, old subjects often appeared in the garb of novelty. "I have just been thinking," said he to some friends, "how David would have done, when anxious to let the people know what God had done for his soul. I could imagine him going to the corner of a house, where several roads met, and where multitudes were passing and re-passing. He gets a stone, places it against the wall, and standing upon it, cries out, 'Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.' Praised be the name of the Lord, I just feel the same desire as David did to make known the goodness and mercy which he has shown me." Humble as this form of address is, and void as many of his witticisms and sayings were of the embellishments of education and literature, they were nevertheless acceptable to that class of persons among whom he lived, and whose benefit he sought. His sentimentality was the outletting of a thinking mind—a mind too, which worked its own way, in defiance of every impediment which might appear to obstruct its researches and conclusions. His theology, apart from his illustrations, was the theology of the pulpit, in cottage costume, and his brethren knew him much better in the home-spun dress of humble life, than in what often amounts to the gilt and tinsel of polished society.

Yet, in the midst of some of his little personal sallies—never employed but with the best intention, as

has been observed, and for the real good of the individual concerned, it is difficult to withhold our approval of his *fidelity*. He would never for a moment, whether entertained in the house of rich or poor, allow a compromise of Christian character with mere etiquette, or conceal his opinion of the moral and religious condition of the several members of the family. A person of wealth, under whose roof he was hospitably treated as a guest, being what is denominated “a free liver,” experienced the weight of both his exhortations and intercessions.

While engaged in family prayer, he dwelt emphatically on the habits indulged by the head of the house : and then, as if to encourage him to break away at once from every sinful bond, he exclaimed “Bless the Lord, it is possible—there is hope—the angels may have yet to say, and that some day soon, ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,’—and let old such an *one* (naming him) come in ;—here he is, the angelic hosts will say,—we have long been looking for him ;—saved at last !” Such an extacy of feeling accompanied the sentiments, that heaven itself seemed opened on the occasion, and nothing appeared wanting but the simple consent of the will—the simple turn of one heart, as upon a pivot, to gladden the spirits of both “the watchers” above, and the “dwellers” below.

Notwithstanding the almost invariable cheerfulness which he manifested, it never degenerated into frivolity. It was the playfulness of the lamb, whenever it was permitted to enter within the bare precincts of hilarity

—innocent in itself, and without the slightest evil tendency to others; and was so tempered with the good and the charitable, that it was impossible not to perceive, that it originated in the sunshine of the heart—in progressive piety—in a consciousness that he was on the move towards a better place, with an improved state of feeling. And as his native buoyancy was never permitted to betray him into improprieties incident to such characters, so neither did the adverse movements of Providence ever occasion unusual depression. While he felt like a parent, and sympathized as a man and a friend, he could still adopt the apostolic language, as expressive of his experience, “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” His sincerity, and the peculiarly Christian views he entertained on providence and grace, would admit of nothing else. He seemed to have a vision of his own very often; and like a person sitting in the same room with his friends, and under the same circumstances, would either be enjoying a landscape in the act of looking out upon it at one window, while they were gazing upon the surrounding district, in a contrary direction, from another; or, if not seated alone, with his own view, but looking from the same casement with those around him, would be certain to fix his eye on the brightest and most cheerful spots, while they were reposing on others, with their more neutral tints, in the shade. Some of the larger objects, and broader outlines would be embraced by his companions, while many of the intermediate fillings, both in the extreme distance and at hand, upon which nature had bestowed

the greatest harmony of proportion and delicacy of colouring, were delighting his own vision. The one would frequently pass over what would arrest the attention of the other. He would pick up a flower, and either point out beauties which had remained invisible to his associates, or would admire it in silence, with a countenance expressive of the pleasure he experienced, in surveying that which he might even fail to explain. But though he occasionally broke down for want of words to describe a thing as it actually appeared in nature, or was represented to his mental eye, he generally succeeded to admiration, when he sought to illustrate one subject by another, and rarely failed to deepen the interest.

The writer has been partly led into these reflections, by the occurrence of two or three painful providences in the history of Crister, in which God, in the language of the "wise woman," was pleased to "quench his coal." He had two boys killed; one in the pit and another above ground. The latter was run over by one of the coal-waggons, and was from six to seven years of age. He was a beautiful boy, and full of interest. The first time his father attended his class after the accident, he observed to the leader and to his classmates, in a somewhat chastened tone, "It seems as though the Lord had come down to look about me, like the gardener, going into his orchard to examine the fruit trees. He goes from one to another; and having carefully gone his round, he puts forth his hand, and plucks one that bears the best and ripest fruit. The boy, whom the Lord has been pleased to take

from me, was the best among all my other children, and therefore the fittest for his own garner. Not my will but Thine be done!" As he felt perfectly resigned to the will of God after the accident, so there was a certain preparedness of feeling to meet it. The very week before it occurred, he said in a public meeting, that his sole wish was, "to be a mere *cipher* in the hand of God—perfectly passive—to be any thing or nothing." The friends who heard him, on being informed of his bereavement, could not but advert with devout feelings to the sentiments of the previous week; and certainly, they harmonized admirably with what followed. While Seneca pours forth his laudatory strains in favour of the masculine and heroic bravery of the Stoics, who put off the man, and trod above the stage of human fortune and accidents, Religion has a much nobler subject for eulogy in such a person as Crister, who, while he feels as a man, is resigned as a Christian,—uniting in himself, as it were, a double character. He stooped, and struck sail to the Providence of God; for he well knew, that whatever disasters befall a good man in his family, unoccasioned by himself, they are the work of a permissive Providence, and that in all the dispensations in which the wisdom of God has the greatest share, and the wisdom of man the least, there is greater cause for adoration than censure—for resignation than complaint. "Thunderbolts," it is stated by one of the ancients, "are never more just, than when they are adored by him who is thunderstruck."

Personal afflictions were borne with equal patience

with those of a domestic character. "I have been poorly," said he to a friend one day, who was enquiring after his health; "and though I have not been entirely laid aside from work, I have found it rather hard to do the little I have done. I sometimes compare myself to an out-patient of the Infirmary. I am not quite bad enough to be taken in; and God keeps handing me out a little strength now and then, like medicine. In His hand I keep improving, though slowly. But all is well within." His breast, which was to a certain extent proof against his own sufferings, was nevertheless tender towards those who were the subjects of fatherly chastisement; and so much so, that, in visiting the sick, he seemed to go to relieve himself rather than the sufferer—relieve himself of those yearnings and meltings of heart which he experienced with regard to their present and eternal welfare. This is the man, who is sick with another's sickness, and yet triumphs over his own! For a man to grieve for his own sufferings, is weakness; not to grieve for those of others, argues a perversity of feeling which ought to be dreaded: such a man has cause to complain, not of Providence, but of himself;—not on account of what he suffers, but because of what he has merited.

Adverting to the season, and the afflictions of others,—"This," said he, "is the time when a number of persons go to Gilsland Wells for the benefit of health; some with one complaint, and some with another; and all go with a belief that they shall recover. Glory be to God, we have Jesus, the well-

spring of eternal life and salvation. This fountain is always open. All may come here,—the poor, the sick, the halt, the blind,—aye, and that without money and without price. Let them only dive in, and they are sure to be healed.” Then, in allusion to his own trials and sufferings, he remarked, “As I was coming down the inclined waggon-way to-day, and was passing by the monkies* in rotation, it came powerfully to mind, that I was on my journey to heaven. I thought, on passing the monkies, it was like passing the exercises of life—a whirl and away again. I had passed many; on looking back, a number were out of sight; on looking forward, I could perceive an end;—and I knew the *last* would come; and O, if ready, then—

“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”

In thus applying some specific object to passing experience, his mind often felt a temporary relief from those distressing occurrences which sometimes heave with the impetuosity and fierceness of the billows of the deep—threatening to dash out, as from the sand, every lovely principle of religion, and leave the mind verging towards the whirlpool of despair. “The Lord has been using the rod,” said he at another period, “but it is all in love,—it is the hand of a Father.

* Monkies, so called, are metal rollers in the middle of the waggon-way, over which the rope passes, and by which it is aided in its progress.

The more a man strikes the spaniel, the closer it will cleave to him. Bless the Lord, the more he afflicts, the closer I will cling to him."

While Crister employed every mean in his power to support himself and his family, he was perfectly dead to the world, so far as a wish for temporal prosperity went, as well as perfectly satisfied with every dispensation of God with regard to his health. He was in fact one of those men, who, agreeably to an opinion of Malvezzi's, would rather have preferred adversity than prosperity, though the latter might have been calculated upon—not in the way of desert, but from his piety and industry. He knew enough, in voyaging across the ocean of life, to convince him, that greater numbers are wrecked in the Pacific, or, in other words, in the haven of tranquillity, than amidst the billows of conflicting disasters. Adversity is calculated to humble, and therefore it is, that the good man, with a fair proportion of this ballast, holds his way—king-like, under its pressure; whereas, prosperity tends to swell and inflate the mind, and so perverts the whole. Besides—to accommodate ourselves to the language of the world, if every man has his *fortune*, and every fortune its *wheel*, where, it may be demanded, is the propriety of complaining? The wheel of no man can descend so much one way, as not necessarily to ascend another. Those persons alone, complain of what they call fortune, who have their souls so firmly attached to their bodies, that when one precipitates, the other descends with it. The Christian, whose soul possesses one part of the

wheel, and his body another, is always at adverse points. So it was with Crister; as the body descended grave-ward, the soul mounted to heaven. He bore his head—aye, and his heart too,—for his treasure and his conversation were in heaven, above the clouds: tempests could not reach him; he was neither shaken by the winds, nor smitten by the lightning.

Limited as were his means of doing good, he employed them as far as they would carry him; and was even inventive, in the benevolence of his heart, in promoting their enlargement. The chapel at Carville was repaired and beautified in the spring of the year before his death; and a collection being to be made, to defray the expenses, he was among the more active to meet the demands, both by personal applications for pecuniary aid, and by inviting people to attend the services on the day of opening. To a friend, whom he met in the streets of Newcastle, he said, "You must come to our opening to-morrow." Some impediments being in the way, they of course were offered as an excuse for not acceding to the request. "Well, then," returned Crister, "you must give me something to put into the box for you." This being readily granted, and to show the person that he would lose nothing by his absence from the services of the occasion, Crister quietly and simply observed, as he put the money into his pocket, "You will get a blessing for this, for we always pray for those who give us any thing."

In addition to private applications, and what he had purposed in his heart to give of his own, he was led

to contribute in another way from that which he at first meditated. Thomas Ellerton, a boy already noticed, and to whom he had been extremely useful, came to him and expressed a wish that he had something to contribute on the occasion, bemoaning his poverty. Crister sympathized with his little class-mate, who himself was a child among children. The boy, as has also been observed, went by the name of "*The little Old Man*," among the seniors in society, because of his stability, good sense, and sedative habits. As Crister intended to go to the extent of what his purse would allow for himself, he was a little puzzled how to relieve the feelings of his juvenile favourite. However, he sent him away, saying, "I think I shall be able to contrive something for you." It was not long before he told him, that he had hit on a plan of relief. "We have a good few leeks," said he, "in our garden; and as there are more than we shall be likely to want, you shall have what we can spare. If you think you can find a market for them, you shall sell them; you shall have one half of the money, and I will take the other, and the whole shall be put into the collection." The boy instantly sprung at the offer; a wheel-barrow was borrowed—the leeks were pulled, and laid in it—the young salesman went through the village, the neighbouring hamlets, and some of the more distant places—and continued his toil, till he sold the whole. He returned home, "though faint," in triumph, bearing his prize like a Grecian from the Olympic games, and made an offering to the Lord of the whole of his share of the sales,

to the delight of the writer, who made the appeal to the liberality of the public on the occasion. Others might have given of their abundance—Crister gave what he could spare of his penury—and this little fellow gave the whole of that which had become his *all*. These “leeks” imparted greater joy of heart both to the giver and the seller than the whole growth of Egypt could have yielded to the languishing Israelites ; and the action will retain its verdure in the recollection of those who witnessed it, much longer than the wreath, composed of the olive, the pine, the apple, and the parsley, according to the well-known Greek epigram, which adorned the brow of the Olympic victor.

Crister, who never forgot a kindness, was in the frequent habit of taking a part of the produce of his garden to persons to whom he felt himself laid under obligation, and of presenting them with the same.

A poor widow, who had lived in the neighbourhood, was involved in great pecuniary distress. Crister heard of it ; and though poor himself, it was a treasure to have him for her friend. He made an instant and powerful appeal to the different persons who had a little to spare at Carville, and with whom he could make free ; and from Carville he posted off to Newcastle. At the latter place, he met with a gentleman in the street, who loved him, and could deny him nothing for which he asked. “What now, Crister?” “I want a little help, Sir, for a poor widow,” he replied, stating her case. “I am without money at present,” returned the gentleman, “but go to my

house, and tell the servant to give you such a sum," naming the amount. Crister modestly hitched in another sentence, which rendered the case a little more impressive, than he found he had made it by previous statement. "Well," returned the gentleman, "let so much be added to it, and tell the servant I sent you." In this way, he procured ample relief, and made the widow's heart rejoice.

Such was the native kindness of his heart, that he often felt as if the mercies of others were his own. "A friend of mine," said he, "in needy circumstances, had some beef and peas given to him the other day. Never did any thing come at a more acceptable time. Why, the man counted every pea as a mercy from God." That the man felt truly grateful, there is no doubt, but Crister's own happy feeling—being a partaker of his joy, aided him in the *expression* of it; descending in the detail of mercies received, to a single *pea*; an acknowledgment only to be found on the lips of one whose heart was filled with adoring gratitude to God.

The religious character of Crister had reached the writer's ears previously to his residence in Newcastle; and as such persons occupy a more than usual share of his attention and regard, the eye was naturally directed towards him. His first appearance to the biographer was in a love-feast held in Brunswick Place Chapel, September, 1834. The circumstances were exceedingly favourable. The Rev. R. Aitkin, and Mr. W. Dawson were at that time on a visit to Newcastle and its vicinity. It was emphatically a visit in

season, as well as a time of *refreshing*. There was a great deal of high and holy feeling in the members of society, while they had to rejoice in an accession to their ranks. Crister participated in the general joy, as well as shared in the sacred influence that pervaded the religious assemblies. The mind, like a fire, seemed always at work—emitting sparks, which were caught by others. His wit on the occasion was sparkling, and his figures appropriate; but his spirit—his spirit exceeded all; it was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The last time the writer conversed with him was at Carville, May 17th, 1835; and then, as he had been found in the intervals between, he was on his way upward, singing and making melody, not only in his heart, but with his lips to the Lord. His joy might be described in the way that a fair author has described a brook, not as gliding quietly through a small green meadow, but as sounding its approach, as in the glad spirit of its young life it comes leaping and dancing down a rocky gorge. His was a “fulness of joy.”

In the course of the week preceding the love-feast, as he was on his way from the workings to the bottom of the pit shaft, in order to leave for the day, he came up to an old man, who was bent with his face downward, cleaning out the curved line in which the wheels of the carriages run, upon which the corves are placed. Being a little dull of hearing, and intent on his work, Crister's hand was on his shoulder, and sending its echo along the working, before he was well aware of any one being near; and with the clap,

instantly followed—"Why, man, there is a crown hanging over your head!" Like one of Bunyan's inimitable characters, who is represented in a somewhat similar light, but as much more intent upon the earth, the old man turned his eye upward, as if to gaze upon some new appearance; but on seeing Crister, the sentence was at once interpreted, and he had a lecture, not to forget the "things above," while engaged with "things below,"—to take heed to his own steps, while "*creasing*" the way of the waggon. The circumstance was told with great effect, and without the least parade, by Crister, who carefully improved it in the love-feast.

CHAPTER VII.

*Singing—A Dream—Mr. Bramwell—His Care over Crister—
A Garden—Honesty—Sudden Conversions—A few of his last
Days—Visit to one of his Daughters—Has a Prayer-Meeting
in a Field—Receives his last Ticket—Remarkable Expressions
—Attends the Bed of the Dying—The Spirit of Prayer—
Family Worship—The Davy Lamp—Descends the Pit for
the Last Time—Fire-Damp—Choke-Damp.*

PRAYER and praise were the delight of his soul; and as he was particularly apt at catching a tune, he very often imported a new one, on his return from a visit to the societies; thus ringing a constant change, with a view to enliven and elevate the mind. "Sweet Home" — "Hallelujah" — "Come to Jesus" — "Babylon," &c., were favourites; and to give wider circulation to one with which he was greatly enamoured, he — poor as he was, employed the press. Though extremely partial to the sprightly in music, yet from the correctness of his ear, and the influence which melody had upon his heart, he manifested less vitiated taste than is often found in humble life, and among persons possessed of stirring qualities, with an inclination to revivalism. The introduction of tunes more fit for the circus and the chase, than the house of God, is a subject of occasional regret; and the misfortune is, when once they find their way among persons similar to the originators — possessed of bad ears,

week heads, and warm hearts, they become exceedingly offensive, and are not easily abandoned.

If the persons who take a lead in the singing, in Wesleyan Chapels, were to familiarize themselves with the tunes in Mr. Wesley's "Sacred Harmony," and in the Hymn Book, published in 1761, with the "Tunes Annexed," the Body would be preserved from much reproach : for though the Founder of Methodism might not be able to compose music like a Mozart or a Handel, or finger the organ and piano with the execution of his nephews, Samuel and Charles, yet the works just noticed, show that he had exquisite knowledge in music, and an ear formed for the sweetest melody. Compare "*Cornish*," and several of the fine old tunes that have ceased to ascend to heaven, and ought to have been handed down as heirlooms to the great Wesleyan Family to the end of the world,—and to which the people must again return, if they wish, as they were wont, to draw the crowd and enchant them with the divinity of their song,—compare, it is reiterated, some of these, with the horse-jockey abominations, which move in the current of persons of bad taste, and instantly the epigrammatic lines of Rochester occur on Sternhold and Hopkins, and feelings are excited similar to those which his wit would attribute to the Psalmist,—though much less provoked on the part of the two old worthies belonging to the establishment, than the moderns in question, with worse ears and better helps. In this way, Crister was not in the habit of offending.

The late Rev. Wm. Bramwell, who, animated as he

was, had a fine ear for music, and amazing compass and sweetness of voice,—employing, even in his preaching, the tenor, the treble, and the base,—each as distinct as in song. This excellent man, who had no extravagance in music, highly esteemed him for his piety and simplicity ; and Crister, with equal veneration, adverted to his character and labour of love. A short time before his death, he dreamed that he saw the sainted form of Bramwell, who told him to live in a state of preparation for heaven, and then beckoned him away from earth. This, though a dream, had a happy influence on his mind, and became an incentive to holiness. It was sunny, and cheering in its character ; and its images, golden bright, glowed in his recollection.

Crister and this excellent minister of God, very often repaired to the chapel, at Carville, as early as three o'clock in the morning, for the purpose of mutual prayer. On one occasion, Mr. B. called at his house in the course of the day, enquiring for him, without stating either his object, or expressing a wish to see him. When Crister reached home, he was informed of the fact, and proceeded to Mr. Reay's, where Mr. B. was taking up his abode. On the latter being informed, that Crister had called, and being asked whether he had not been enquiring for him, he returned, without giving a direct answer,—“ Step in.” No sooner was the room door closed, than Mr. B. said, “ Let us pray a bit ;” and so saying, knelt and prayed with his usual fervour. After him, Crister prayed ; and when the meeting concluded, Mr. B.

without any further remark, grasped him by the hand, and dismissed him, saying, "There, that will do." On Crister leaving the house, it instantly flashed into his mind, "Mr. B. has heard something unfavourable of me, and has employed this method to try my *spirit*, in order to see whether I have access at a throne of grace." To persons who knew Mr. B., Crister's conjecture would not appear at all unnatural; and to those that knew Crister,—whatever a holy jealousy might prompt, on the part of Mr. B., an unfavourable report was not calculated—had it even been the case, to produce a deep impression. He kept at the utmost distance from sin; and understood well the import of those interrogatories of Solomon, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go on hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" He knew that, to avoid evil, was not to go near it.

It being Crister's place generally to extinguish the lights after the service, Mr. Bramwell lingered behind the congregation one evening, and coming up, accosted him,—“ Well, how do you feel ? ” “ Happy,” he returned. Taking a silver comb out of his pocket, Mr. B. proceeded, “ Are you any thing like that comb ? ” Crister, perceiving the composition, replied, “ Why, not quite,—but a little like it. ” “ Well—well—look for the blessing of *sanctification*,” said Mr. B.; “ it is *pure silver*, and will *comb* all *smooth*,” He knew that Crister had enough to ruffle the spirits from certain quarters, and by these little hints accompanied with occasional imagery, in order to impress an

uncultivated, yet highly imaginative mind, he urged him forward in his Christian course.

A visit from Mr. Bramwell was no uncommon occurrence to him. While engaged in his garden one day, Mr. B. drew near, and hung upon the rails. "That is a fine bed of tulips," said he. Crister, who was partial to his garden, was pleased with the remark, and acquiesced in its justice. "They are all *beautiful*," proceeded Mr. B.;—"they all *differ*—and they all yield a *fragrance*." This was equally agreeable with what preceded. "The children of God," continued Mr. B. "are all different; hence the propriety of their *bearing* with each other,—for there is something beautiful—something to be commended in all." A moral lecture of this kind, was as acceptable, as remarks on natural beauty. Some time elapsed, when Mr. B. changed the subject; and having seen Crister put some seed into the ground, he enquired, "Don't the cocks and hens come now and then, and scratch it up?" "Yes, Sir," returned Crister. "And how do you feel on those occasions?" subjoined Mr. B. "Why, it is hard," returned Crister; "but then I have grace to bear it." He knew, that if Christians ought to bear with each other, such intelligences should bear with the irrational part of God's creation. Such, indeed, was his native kindness, that he would have as soon thrown some grains of corn down to them, as attempt to injure them on driving them away. It was only the principle carried out to these, that he exercised towards

his own species—heaping “ coals of fire on the head” of an enemy.

But he was exercised in another way. The soil was poor, and manure was scarce. The latter might have been obtained, by making free with what belonged to the colliery ; and another person had thus made free, in order to enrich his crop of potatoes. Crister’s conscience would not suffer him to take the slightest liberty with another person’s property ; and his poverty would not allow him to go any distance from home to make a purchase. The result was, that he was obliged to set his potatoes without manure ; but such was the honour God conferred upon his integrity, that—though both gardens were distinguished for the same soil, he had a much larger crop than the person who had planted his *sets* in the heart of stolen materials. This is worthy of a place in the tract entitled, “ Honesty is the best policy.”

The secret of the whole, whether providential smiles, public favours, usefulness, or whatever else is lovely and of good report, is to be found in his piety towards God. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father in heaven. Allusion has been made more than once to his conduct in prayer-meetings ; and though many more instances of usefulness could be adduced, another may be added to the number. His conduct in those meetings has been partially described ; but it is impossible to give an accurate delineation of his spirit, his language, and his movements. He watched the countenances of the people—especially strangers, and persons of devout

demeanour, like a fowler following the shiftings and flutterings of a bird with his eye, which he was anxious to bring down—waiting the fitful moment for a direct and final aim ; and no sooner did he perceive the slightest indications of penitential sorrow, than he gave his best advice—pointing them to “ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world,” and poured out for them his fervent prayers. A penitential tear in the eye of another, sparkled like a jewel in his own ; and he never failed to bring it to a good marketable price, in reference to its possessor—becoming, through prayer, “ the pearl of great price,” in the blessed realities of personal religion. An aged woman, passing the door of one of the chapels, on her way to the market, turned in, with her basket under her arm, having had her attention arrested by the voice of praise and prayer. She had not continued long before she was in deep distress of mind, and expressed an ardent desire for the salvation of her soul. Crister was in the chapel, and soon found her ; on addressing her, and receiving her replies, he embodied, in the simplicity of his heart, the substance of the conversation in his prayer—her going to market—passing the house of God—listening to the hosannas of the saints—her ignorance even of her age, till she looked for it in one of the end leaves of the Bible—her wickedness—her desire to have her name written in the Lamb’s book of life—the uncertainty of every thing here—a present salvation—then, with an energy and command of language peculiar to himself, followed an enumeration of the

miracles and other occurrences mentioned in the Scriptures, in attestation of the ability and willingness of the Lord to save, with appeals to his immutability and readiness to communicate mercy especially to the penitent—the whole urged with a faith, and an earnestness, so eminently honoured in the wrestlings of Jacob, that brought joy into the heart of the aged sinner.

There is a strong feeling of objection in the minds of some persons against sudden conversions; but it is a feeling which the apostle Paul had to combat. “If,” says he, “the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and *falling down* on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is among you of a truth.”—1 Cor. xiv. 23-25. “Who does not,” enquires Dr. A. Clark, in his sermon on “The Christian Prophet and his Work”—“see here a parallel case to Saul among the prophets, especially if collated with 1 Sam. xix. 20-24.: ‘And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying (*i. e. praying*, for such is the import of the term here) and Samuel standing presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they all prophesied (or *prayed*). And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again a third time,

and they prophesied also. And Saul went to Naioth of Ramah ; and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied. And he stripped off his clothes, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore, they say (as in the case related, chap. x.), Is Saul also among the prophets !' I have often observed," the Dr. adds, " in public meetings among religious people, especially in *meetings* for PRAYER, that persons wholly unconcerned about the matter in hand, or its issue, have been suddenly seized by the spirit of the supplicants, while vacantly staring at those employed in the sacred work, and *falling down* on their knees, have acknowledged the power and presence of the Most High ; and like Saul among the prophets, have gone on supplicating with them, with a renewed heart, and a right spirit.—Those who have taken on them unmercifully to criticise and condemn such meetings, should prove, in vindication of their own conduct, that Saul, the sons of the prophets, and the venerable Samuel at their head, were enthusiasts and fanatics ; and that the parallel case in 1 Corinthians xiv. should have been marked by the apostle with terms of abhorrence and detestation, that others might be deterred from copying the example."

Crister witnessed several instances of this kind ; and one of the most distinguished, was the case of a sailor, who was smitten to the ground by the power of God,—entered the meeting a hardened profligate, and returned home a " new man."

The suddenness of the removal of the subject of the

Memoir, which we now hasten to notice, will only admit of our hovering round the open ground of his *last days*, rather than of our entering within the sacred enclosure of his *last moments*;—of our viewing him, when unconscious of any one looking at him in the ordinary business of life, rather than when sitting for his religious portrait. These are the times and seasons for arriving at real character,—when a man is moving among men, insensible of their presence and of their eye.

He visited one of his daughters, who is married, and resides at Little Town, no great distance from Durham, on the banks of the Wear, the Saturday before his death. It appears as though the invisible hand of Heaven had conducted him thither, to give to her and her family his last blessing. He called upon different friends, both on his route to the place and on his return—spoke to them and prayed with them. Not finding any place appropriated to public worship at Little Town, among his own people, and anxious to enjoy some mean of grace, which he could not do in a private dwelling, the houses being cleaned for Sunday, he collected a few serious persons together,—mostly young men; and said, “Come, lads, the fields will do for me; and if they will do for you, we shall have a prayer-meeting in the open air.” So saying, he led them on to a retired nook on the Saturday evening, and there, as a preparation for the Sabbath, in that place, unfrequented for such purposes, they all knelt down, and prayed alternately—for, he afterwards observed, in the language of an eminent statesman in

reference to another subject, "we had a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether;" thus enjoying, that which Apostles and primitive Christians—only on another day and in a more frequented spot, enjoyed, when "on the Sabbath" they "went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made; and sat down, and spake unto the" persons "which resorted thither." After this out-door exercise, he sat up till late, singing and praying with a few friends, to whom he observed, amongst other things, that he could not satisfactorily account for his being there at that particular time.

On the forenoon of the Lord's-day, a young man—a local preacher, addressed such as were disposed to hear him in a private dwelling. Crister was there; and the preacher had the aid of his prayers,—having prayed twice publicly at the close of the address; observing to his daughter afterwards,—"The *lad* seemed frightened; and I wished to encourage him. I thought it was a pity for him to come such a long way, and get nothing for it. But the Lord warmed our hearts, and he took some *fire* back with him." While with his daughter, he was incessant in his exhortations to *piety* and *unity*. Desirous of obtaining as much of the bread of life as he could, he stopped at Shiney Row, in the Sunderland Circuit, on his return, and heard a sermon on the Sunday evening; which was to him, what the "cake baken on the coals, and the cruse of water," were to Elijah, who, "in the strength of that meat," prosecuted the remainder of his journey.

A person speaking to him on the dangers to which

colliers were exposed, he remarked, "We should always be ready; then, sudden death will be sudden bliss." On the Tuesday before he died, he said to those who were sitting around him, "Let us live to God, and we shall go off to Heaven some day like a clap of thunder." It is impossible not to associate his quickly-approaching exit with this form of expression;—sudden and unexpected to himself, and solemnly impressive to others. On the evening of the same day, he received his last Society Ticket from Mr. Mann, on which occasion he expressed himself as happy in the religion he possessed; saying, in the course of the evening, when speaking of vital godliness, "I always like to be on the *sunny* side of the *wall*:" a metaphor well understood by pitmen, who, before the sun has obtained too much power to be oppressive—say, in the month of May, will group together, and squat themselves by the side of a wall; and there, while enjoying social intercourse with each other, will bask beneath his animating beams. He added, in pursuing the figure,—“I have been on the *cold* side, and know what it is; but I never liked the *shade*. There was no fruit *there* worth eating. But I got upon Jacob's ladder—climbed to the top—and slid down the other side, where I found fine rich wall-fruit, both varied and plentiful.”

The nearer we approach the spot where we have to part with this good man, the more hallowed becomes the character of his personal piety, and with the greater confidence we leave him to pursue the brief remainder of his pilgrimage alone. In the course of the evening,

previous to his death, he visited a son of Henry Holt, of Bigge's Main, who was ill, and apparently not likely to recover. He prayed with him, and gave him such advice and encouragement as seemed to be required. In his prayer, he dwelt particularly on death; and then, as if a sudden gleam of light had opened upon him, and he beheld Heaven immediately over his head, he broke away in a transport of joy, repeating—"It is *down* to death, and *up* to glory;—*down* to death, and *up* to glory!" leaving an impression, when coupled with his own almost immediate *descent* into the pit, and sudden *ascension* to Heaven, that there was something prophetic in the employment of such phraseology at that particular time. And what renders it more remarkable is, that on leaving the young man, after cheering him forward, just as he was about to enter "the valley of the shadow of death," he is stated to have said,—“Go on; we shall not have long to stay; I may get to Heaven perhaps before you.”

On his return home he called on another family: and as he rarely left any without prayer, he engaged in the exercise here as he had done by the couch of the sick, where his words had been dropping balm. He was generally *short*, both in his *prayers* and in narrating his religious experience. But on this occasion, he prayed fluently, feelingly, earnestly, and believingly, for nearly the space of an *hour*. Time and space seemed annihilated; he was taken up to God in spirit, and placed immediately at the foot of the throne of grace, where he felt all the force of that brief sentence, which is commensurate in its

encouragements with the longest prayer—"Ask, and ye shall receive."

He did not leave home on the Thursday morning till about half-past eight o'clock; and what is remarkable, when engaged in family prayer with his wife, he gave utterance to the following lines, offering them as a petition on the behalf of himself:—

"O that without a lingering groan,
"I may the welcome word receive;
"My body with my charge lay down,
"And cease at once to work and live;"

little aware that both were to be laid down in the space of six hours. Such things, if they do no more, and were even unconnected with any thing like heavenly intimations, show a certain preparedness of mind for a nobler state of existence.

Looking at the "pitman," passing from his own house to his work, it may be literally said—while carrying the "Davy Lamp," that he goes with his life in his hand. Montgomery, in his lectures on the "British Poets," employs the invention as an illustration of a particular topic; and in its employment, not only describes the perils of the Miner, but the character and properties of the lamp itself. "The marvels of Romance," he remarks, "are daily exceeded in the proportion as fact, frequently transcends fiction in its strange and infinitely diversified developments. Was the Lamp of Aladdin, in the Arabian Nights, with all its mysterious virtue, to be compared with the Lamp of Sir Humphrey Davy, by which the

Miner is enabled to pursue his perilous researches in the bowels of the earth, and dig out its hidden treasures, in the very presence of one of the most tremendous powers of Nature, which, like the hundred-headed Dragon of the Hesperides watching the golden apples, seemed placed there to interdict the approach of man. He, nevertheless, by means of no magic circle, but within a slight enclosure of wire-gauze, guarding the incendiary light from the attack of the fire-damp spirit, labours unharmed, and breathes under an atmosphere of death, which, (should the besieger, in some neglected moment, break through the slender fence,) would explode and involve himself and his companions in instantaneous destruction amidst the ruins of their works."

The hour arrived, when Crister was to be "counted with them that go down into the pit," and when, on his descent into the bowels of the earth, he was to see the blue Heavens above him, while turning his eye up the shaft, as through a telescope, for the last time. Then, it was literally with him—"Down to death, and up to glory."

The last time he was seen alive by those who left the pit, was sometime between eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon previous to the accident. He was sitting by the side of one of the workings, taking a lunch, as a person passed him on his way out of the pit. And the next time that he was seen was, on the afternoon of the next day—Friday, when he was found a corpse.

As there is a difference between the *fire-damp* and

the *choke-damp*, and as it is probable, that it was by the former that the subject of this memoir perished, it may not be improper to make two or three remarks upon the destructive element itself, before we proceed to its appalling effects in the general calamity yet to be detailed. It is well known to men of science, that the compound gases are numerous. As many as forty of them have been examined with accuracy. That which is obtained from pit coal, and which is so beneficially applied to the lighting-up of our streets and manufactories, is denominated carbonated hydrogen gas. It rises abundantly from stagnant water, when the mud is stirred at the bottom ; and exhales, too, in large quantities, as in this instance, from coal mines, often proving destructive to the miners, by its taking fire on the approach of their lights. It was originally called the *fire-damp* by the miners. The explosive effects of it have been obviated by Sir H. Davy's Safety Lamp just noticed. It is composed of hydrogen and carbon (charcoal,) and was one of the first elastic fluids distinguished from common air with certainty.

The *choke-damp* differs from this. It will be found that when charcoal is burned in a vessel of oxygen gas, and the products are preserved, a gas very different from the oxygen occupies its place in this new gas : any burning body is immediately extinguished by it, and an animal put into it, immediately expires. Experiments show, that it is equal in weight to the oxygen employed and the charcoal burnt, and is a combination of these two substances. It exists in abundance in chalk, limestone, marble, and many

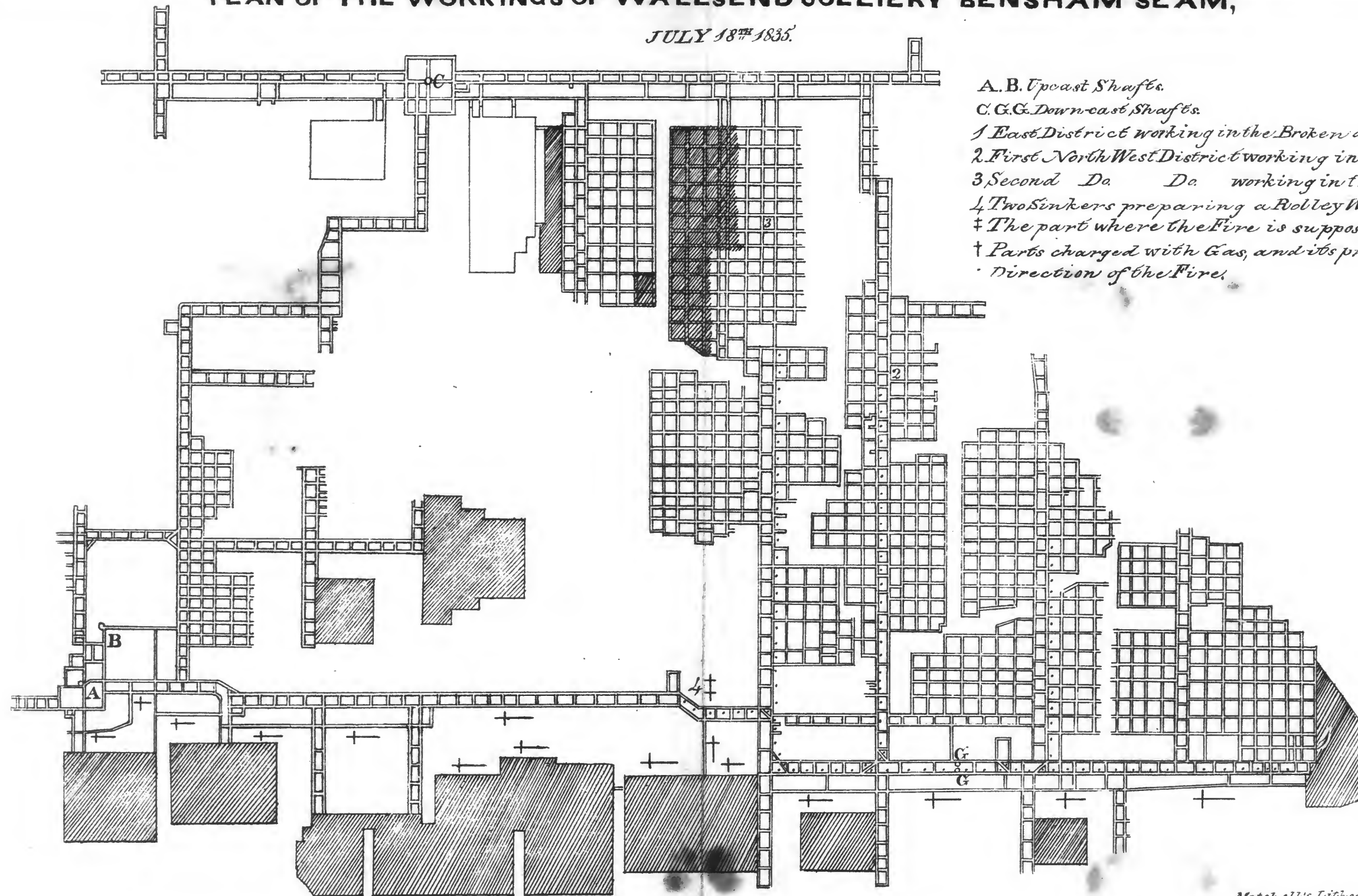
other substances; and is likewise found during the various fermentation of liquors, and in the burning of charcoal. It is much heavier than common air, and is often found at the bottom of wells, brewers' vats, and in cellars. Hence the danger of persons sleeping in close rooms where charcoal is burnt, or near lime-kilns; and of workmen descending into wells, or cellars, and brewers' vats, without caution. When danger is suspected, a lighted candle should first be let down; if it go out, quicklime should be let down and sprinkled with water, and this will absorb the gas. When found in mines and in caverns, it is called the *choke-damp*. Its destructive effect arises from its causing suffocation. By this, old *Joseph Lawson* was probably killed. This gas has acid properties. It was designated at first by different names, by those who first examined it; as gas sylvestre, fixed air, aerial acid, mephitic acid, calcareous acid, and since its true composition was discovered, it is called *carbonic acid gas*. It has its uses in the extensive operations of nature, but into which it would be irrelevant to enter.

The discharge of *gas* at the C Pit, Wall's End, was equal at the time of the accident, agreeably to the testimony of Mr. Reay, to *eleven hogsheads* per minute. It varies a little; but day and night, summer and winter, the flame is seen from afar—illuminating especially during the deepest shades of night the neighbourhood around, and would be sufficient, by pipes properly laid, to light the streets of a moderate sized town, or an extensive tract of country.

**REDUCTION RATIO
OF FOLLOWING
FRAME CHANGES
TO 12:1**

PLAN OF THE WORKINGS OF WALLSEND COLLIERY BENSHAM SEAM,

JULY 18TH 1835.



A. B. Upcast Shafts.

C. G. G. Down-cast Shafts.

1 East District working in the Broken or Pillars.

2 First North West District working in the whole.

3 Second Do. Do. working in the whole and Broken.

4 Two Sinkers preparing a Rolley Way.

† The part where the Fire is supposed to have originated.

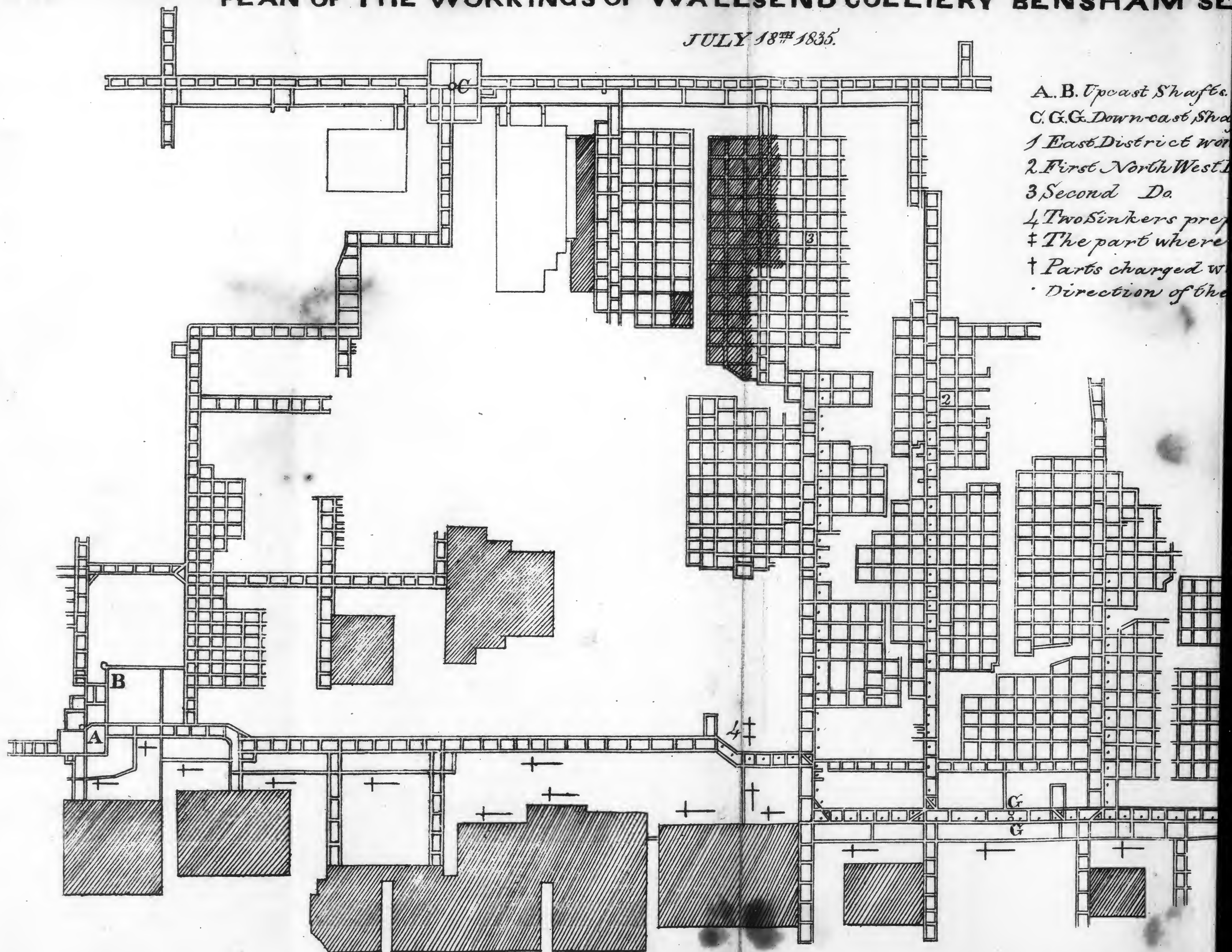
† Parts charged with Gas, and its principal direction.

Direction of the Fire.

**REDUCTION RATIO
OF FOLLOWING
FRAME CHANGES
TO 8:1**

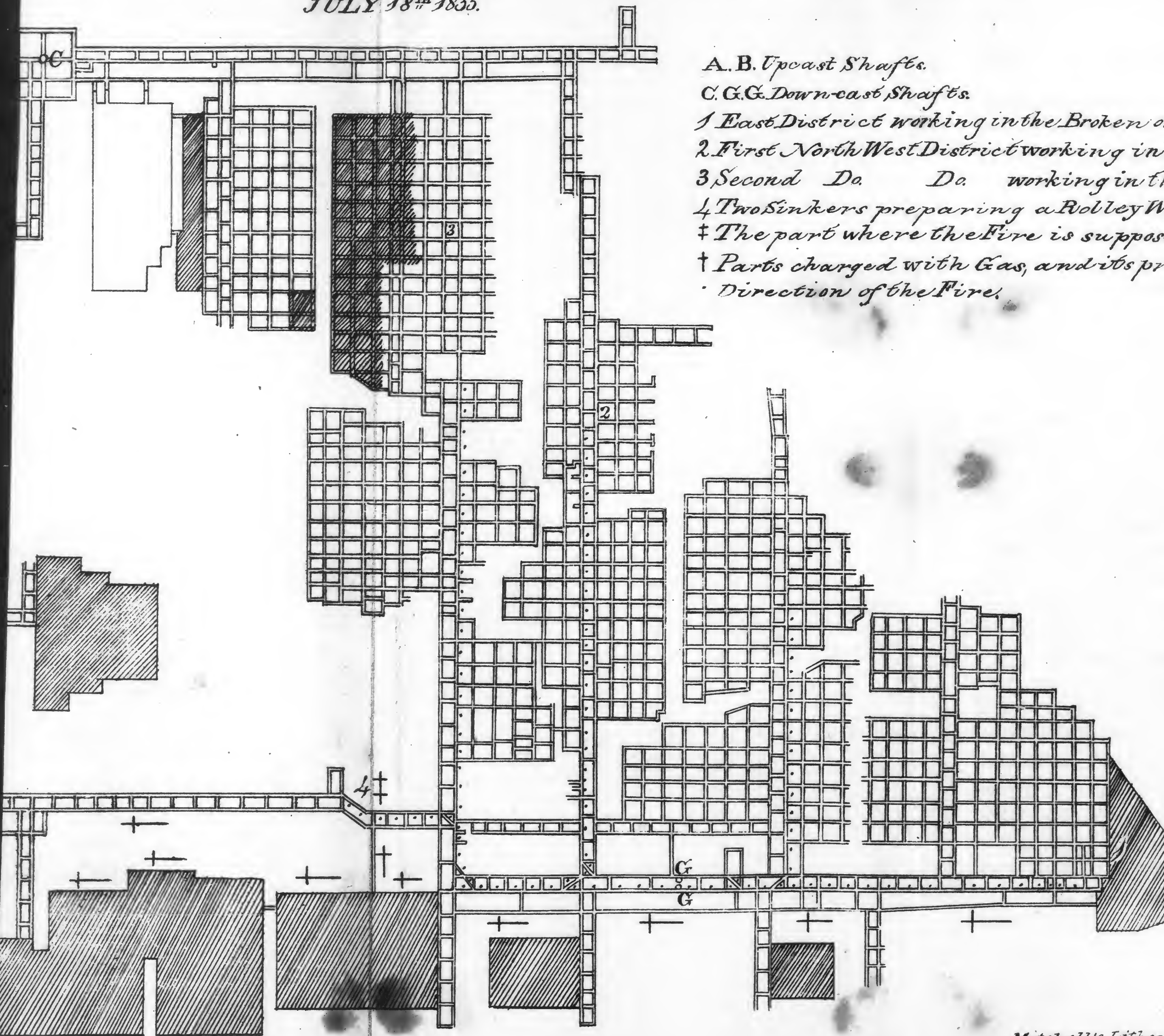
PLAN OF THE WORKINGS OF WALLSEND COLLIERY BENSHAM SE

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Direction of the Fire.

CHAPTER VIII.

The CATASTROPHE—Religious Aspect of the Subject—Extent of the Calamity—The Rapidity with which the Fire moved—Kindness mixed with Severity—The Guilty spared—A Merciful Providence in the Timing of the Event—The general Distress occasioned.

The Catastrophe.

SUBJECTS are contemplated by different men in different lights. The dreadful catastrophe at WALL'S END COLLIERY, Thursday, June 18th, 1835, through which 103 human beings lost their lives,* and had their doom fixed for ever, agreeably to their several characters, will be viewed by a *philosopher* in a purely *scientific* light, who, anxious to ascertain *natural causes*, will be equally—and laudably too, solicitous, to prevent a recurrence of similar dreadful effects. But his views are bounded by the earth on which he stands, as his object is to prevent the premature extinction of mere animal life. The aspects of the subject with the *Christian*, are *moral* and *religious*. He stretches his thoughts through the vista of time: they reach the shores of eternity; and there he himself stands in his imaginings—imaginings stamped into realities by a divine revelation—stands, with an immortal spirit in his momentary keeping, with the ocean before him.

* See Note C, for a complete list of the Sufferers,—Appendix.

flashing with light, or veiled in midnight darkness,—an ocean that can neither be fathomed nor sounded, and which is without a shore. Whatever is launched there, floats on for ever—on—and on—in misery or felicity. Time, to him, assumes the importance of Eternity; Religion is every thing; and in contemplating the scene, the Soul—lost or saved—is never for a moment absent from his mind—its final state incessantly haunting his thoughts like an apparition.

As every thing *below ground*, and connected with the *Colliery*, is to be found in a Report of the *depositions* taken during the CORONER'S INQUEST on the case, we shall direct our attention chiefly to what took place *above ground*. The persons summoned to meet on such inquests, have to do with the *world*; we have to attend to the *church*: they have to look to the *body*; we have to look to the *soul*: they have to attend to the *temporal comforts* of the man, by improving the state of the pit; we have to attend to the *spiritual* and *eternal* interests of those around, in order to prevent a plunge into another pit—to avoid the scorching influence of another fire.

The writer, who was called upon, with others, to improve the melancholy occasion, by preaching sermons in different places, and in each service, to make an appeal to the benevolence of the Christian public, on the behalf of a number of bereaved families, some of whom had their principal earthly props removed from beneath them, stands in the relation to the subject, of a person in the midst of the slain—having witnessed almost every scene of writhing agony—and

heard almost every form of expression of which excessive grief could lay hold, to give utterance to its inward workings, and force a passage for its relief. The catastrophe occurred about two o'clock on the *Thursday* afternoon—at the moment he was preparing a sermon for the dreadful accident which took place in *Nuns' Field*,* only about a half an hour from the same time the *preceding Thursday*, and not being in the way of hearing of it till Friday morning, he was prevented from visiting the “Field of Graves” and the houses of mourning earlier than the forenoon of that day. He was regular, however, in his visits from Newcastle, on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, up to which period the body of only *one* remained in the pit, the dangerous state of which prevented even filial and parental affection from breaking through, to reach him. Like a person under the influence of strong temptation, with

* Just at the moment, too, and only a few hundred paces from the place where the writer was sitting, the workmen were digging out the dying and the dead, while he was reading Luke 13th chapter, in his own house; little aware that he should be so soon presented with a practical illustration of the 4th and 5th verses, and that he should be called upon, in a discourse founded on those verses, to improve the occasion, in the Wesleyan Chapel, Brunswick Place. At the close of the sermon, a collection was made, for the widows, orphans, and surviving sufferers, amounting to £28 15s. 1½d. By this accident, 21 persons were injured;—*ten* of whom were taken to the Infirmary—*four* killed on the spot—and *three* died soon afterwards:—the remainder were taken to their own homes. *Four* widows and *ten* orphans were left to buffet their way through life. It may be said, with regard to the two melancholy events, so near to each other, and in the same neighbourhood, “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.”

neither the power to resist, nor yet fit to be there, because of excited feeling, he nevertheless availed himself of every opportunity, of affording solace to the distressed;—visiting the families from house to house—speaking to some—praying with others—and as often compelled to turn aside, in order to regain the utterance that had been choked by the sympathetic sob. Every process was witnessed from the body being stretched in the cart—conveyed home—met by the agonized family at the door—laid in the coffin—shrouded—waiting for the day of interment—again carried forth—and attended by mourners to the house appointed for all living.

There is not on record,* in the same district, a single case in the immense chapter of accidents among the collieries, in which there has been such a loss of human life as in this—106 sufferers in all, and only *four* brought out alive, and these the subjects of serious injury. Not an individual, however, was left to say *how* or *where* the accident commenced. Experienced and practical men had to supply the lack of necessary information, during the inquest, with conjecture, probability, inference, and analogy.† All that is positively

* See Note D, for a Table of Accidents,—Appendix.

† It may be observed, that it has been ascertained, in the course of exploring the mine since the accident occurred, that the explosion did not take place in any of the working districts, nor at a Davy-lamp; but that it must have happened in the gas-pipe drift, from the first S. W. district, in the G, or Church Pit, out of which the pillars were worked some years ago. Two men, William Thompson and William Johnson, were blasting down the roof-stone to make horse-height for a new rolley-way,

known, from occasional visible traces of its effects, is, that the destructive element was let loose from its confinement—by another, it may be, than human hand, and that, like an unchained monster, raging through various workings,—“*its breath*,” in the language of Job, “kindling coals, and a flame going out of *its mouth*,”—destroyed every thing possessed of life in its immediate track—first exploding at the shafts contiguous to Wall’s End Church—then, dividing its strength, partly directing its course westward to the Carville shaft, where a minor explosion took place, but chiefly northward, in the terror of its power, to another shaft—the principal shafts forming a kind of triangle, and from three-quarters to upwards of half a mile distant from each other—exploding a third and last time at the northern entrance,—the ground shaking the while, according to the testimony

near to a “stenting,” which led through the coal barrier wall into the pipe drift. A *man door* was placed in this stenting, for the convenience of the wastemen going into the pipe-drift; and from the situation in which William Thompson’s body was found, there can scarcely be a doubt that he had either opened this man door, and fired the gas in the pipe-drift, or that he had approached it so near, that the gas, oozing through the crevices of the door, had fired at his candle, and, passing along the pipe-drift, like a train, exploded the gas in the first S. W. district, as already stated. This district has been in a *crept* state for several years, and could not be ventilated; it has, therefore, been standing *dead*, or charged with gas. Johnson was working in the *stow-board*, at some distance from Thompson, with a Davy-lamp, which he still held in his hand when his body was found. His body was not at all burnt, while that of Thompson was severely scorched. As no fire had been in those divisions of the workings where the Davy-lamps were used, it is reasonable to conclude that the explosion had not happened from any mismanagement of, or accident to, the lamps.

of persons passing along the Shields road at the time. But though its last convulsive throes were felt above, and its last voice was heard, its work was not finished. It returned, so to speak,—took another form—more silent, but not less certain—suffocating, with what is called the “*after-damp*,” those whom the *fire* had spared—meeting them as they were escaping from other workings—workings, which, as yet, had been unvisited, and in which they had only heard the thunder of its voice : thus verifying, on a minor scale, the general ravages of death, which in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, was painted in the character of a goddess, holding a sickle in her hand, with this inscription, “*Nemini parco*,”—I spare no man. Scarcely any occurrence is capable of affording a more striking exemplification of part of Byron's description of “The Destruction of Sennacherib,” than this—omitting the supposition of its having been a heavy *judgment* upon the sufferers, and that they were indiscriminately the *foes* of God and his people, as were the Assyrians :—

——“The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd ;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their breasts but once heaved, and for ever grew still !”

Here, “the Angel of Death,” did but just *breathe* in the *face* of both man and beast, while the *blast* of his voice, on its way upward, told the living relations the tale of *Death's* doings below. And O, with the silence of that voice, what was the *stillness* beneath !

and what the commotion above! Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, in hopeless misery, flying from house to house, in open day, thinking of nothing but the suffocated, scorched, and mangled remains of those who went forth in health and strength to labour only a few hours before, and who, though then hushed in death, upwards of one hundred and forty fathoms immediately beneath their feet, were still living in their affection—affection re-invigorated by the circumstances of the occasion—and yet without any possibility of coming near them for some time, owing to the deadly, impure state of the pit!—the *choke-damp* and *after-damp*, as described by miners, though differing in character, being the same in their effects on human life.

All this was effected nearly within the short space that elapses between a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. “You see yon shaft,” said a good man to the writer, pointing from the one north, where both stood, to the one east of Carville, at which the first explosion was heard; “you see yon shaft,” said he. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he enquired, “How long, think you, was the blast in passing through all the workings—going up to the west towards Carville, exploding there, and coming and exploding here?” Not being aware of the distance underground, a negative reply was the only one that could be made. The narrator, deeply affected with what it had cost him during its brief but destructive progress—having lost *three sons* by it, added, “Only two minutes and a half!” Another friend, however,

who had more experience in these things, and had been connected with the pit between twenty and thirty years, stated the time occupied to have been little more than a minute—having travelled about two thousand yards, or one mile and a quarter. What a minute! both in itself—as to the vastness of the work executed, and to the persons concerned—in fixing their final state! If the whole circumference of the earth be but a point of the universe; and if all the time that has been, or ever shall be, may be comprised in one single instant of eternity, well may we exclaim in the language of the Psalmist, “What is man?” He is, in person, a mere point of this circumference; and his life is but a moment of that eternity. But on that *moment*, all is suspended—heaven with all its glories—hell with all its terrors! The beginning, the middle, the end of that moment, is important to man; but especially the latter, when unapprized of its arrival,—for there, time closes, and eternity begins, or more properly opens. A minute! to last for ever in its effects!

Another man, who was standing near the shaft where the first explosion was heard, and waiting with others on the Saturday for intelligence from those who had gone down, through pure affection, to combat death in his own domains, was interrogated by the writer on different points, when he said—“I was working here when *she* first blasted. The first thing I heard was a rush of air, accompanied by a cloud of dust, in the midst of which was a piece of cloth or something, which I took to be some of the men's

clothes, and which was carried away in the air. On seeing and hearing this, I knew what was to follow : and *she* went off directly." David had *seen* nothing like this, when he said, " There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured : coals were kindled by it—thick clouds passed—and coals of fire." But the royal bard had *heard* of God's terrible doings ; he described Him as manifested in His *works* ; and here too—if the earth is His, and Providence is still in operation, we are bound to acknowledge His hand ; as much so, indeed, as when Habakkuk said, " before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." O, yes, God was in the "*blast* !"

Destructive, however, as was the blast, the stroke was tempered with mercy. Two men, who were employed at the furnace at the bottom of the shafts adjoining Carville, were saved. These are termed two *upcast* shafts. As soon as the men found that the pit had fired, they immediately threaded their way through the least dangerous workings to the northern shaft, which is a *downcast*, and which experience taught them was the best course to pursue. Speaking to one of them on the subject of his escape, he said. " It is marvellous how ever we got out. I was scarcely sensible for some time, and extremely weak. The air was so bad, that I was almost gone ; but I struggled hard. It is all mercy ; for if God had not helped, there would have been no possibility of escaping with life." The other person who was preserved, and thus snatched as a brand from the burning, was

Thomas Kennedy, who, for the first time himself, attended class with Crister, on the first night of the latter meeting in one, as noticed in a previous page; and was thus closely connected with the stroke that deprived him of natural life, as he had taken the first step with him in the beginning of a religious existence. So true is it, in a thousand cases beside the one mentioned by our Saviour, and where there is very often almost equal danger, "the one shall be taken, and the other left."

A very remarkable case of providential interference was, the preservation of *John Reed*, rolley-wayman, *Robert Moralee*, door-keeper, aged 70, *John Brown*, onsetter at the shaft, and *Martin Middleton*, a boy about fourteen years of age. One of these was a member of Mr. Reay's class. All were more or less burnt; but John Reed had a leg broken; and to add to the poignancy of his feelings, he lost two sons by the accident. But of these further notice will be taken.

One youth was lost, of the name of Appleby, who went to work for another, to allow him to go to Newcastle races, which were then being held. The survivor saved his own life at the immense cost of that of another. Here was occasion both for gratitude and repentance. It was a mysterious Providence, that permitted the comparatively innocent to be punished in the place of the guilty; but God the Father did no more here than he countenanced in the death of his own Son: and as he effected our salvation by that measure, he might, in a way unknown to us, turn to a

good account, the youth's disaster in the pit, while the more criminal of the two—and therefore the least fit for a sudden removal, was indulged with a longer space for repentance. The stipulated wages for Appleby's service was one shilling; that shilling cost him his life.*

But the most marked Providence was visible in the *timing* of the general stroke. Had the accident occurred a little *earlier* on the *same day*, both *old* and *young* would have been swept out of existence—scarcely any of the underground workmen would have been left about the colliery—and the houses would have been filled with only *widows* and *orphans*. Most of the *married* men had reached the day—some half an hour, an hour, two hours, or more, before the desolating element was let loose upon human life. The Divine Being, severe as was the stroke, mercifully drew the line across the multitude of moving beings just at the time and towards the place, when and where—in a mighty sweep, the separation would be the least afflictive in its *consequences* to the living. In Mr. Reay's class, most of the boys and young men were taken—taken like so many lambs prepared for the slaughter—removed, however, more suddenly than even these—and exchanging *literally*, in the language of Crister, who suffered with them—language which, in his rapt moments he was wont to employ—"exchanging the *pit cap* for a crown of glory!"

* The race-goer died a martyr to his vices in the course of twelve months.

Speaking to one of the men who left work before the pit exploded ; he said he had been only two hours out, when the accident took place. “ You were within, two hours, then,” returned the writer, “ of *eternity*.” The man seemed impressed with a sense of the divine goodness, and was grateful for his escape. With many of the people, the catastrophe was turned to a profitable account. “ It is a loud call,” said a woman, who had a son taken away by the stroke : adding, “ yes, yes—it is a loud call indeed.” Going into another house, and on the question being proposed,—“ Have *you* sustained any loss by the accident ?” A female replied, who was pensively seated alone, “ No,—there are none gone out of *this* house, of *our own* ; but,” she added, “ we have *friends* taken away by the stroke : it has scarcely missed a house !” It gave a person, familiar with scripture, an idea of the distress of the Egyptians, when their first-born were taken away from before their eyes ; and the writer felt in his visits on the Monday, as if he scented death in every direction,—being reminded of that sacredly poetical allusion to one of the noblest, but irrational portions of God’s creation, in a case in which the dead and the dying strew the ground—“ he smelleth the battle afar off.” So general was the calamity, that though a house might be missed here and there, over which the destroying angel passed, without having visited the inmates with *actual loss* ; yet, so numerous were the *connecting links* of *relationship*, that one house of mourning was added to another, with very few spaces between ; and even persons exempt

from it partook of the general gloom which was thrown over the neighbourhood, like one vast pall, where every feeling, except that of heart-rending grief, was dead within the people.

CHAPTER IX.

The CATASTROPHE continued—Pleasing Indications of a Preparation for another World in some of the Juvenile Sufferers—The Scriptures—Prayer preferred to necessary Food—Sunday School Teachers' Festival, and its painful Associations—Extorted Confessions, and Knowledge of Character—Exemplifications of Christian Fortitude and Resignation in the Bereaved—Unruffled Repose—Agony blended with Tenderness—Painful Disappointment—The Mother and the Christian—Agonizing Reflections—Sources of Consolation—Circumstances heightening the Distress consequent on the Loss of Life, in the Widow and the Fatherless—Despair—Consequences of the disfigured State of some of the Bodies.

As Religion had her triumphs in some of the bereaved parents and friends after the event, so she had made her glorious entrance, and taken up her abode in the bosoms of several of the actual sufferers before it took place. Eleven members of the Wesleyan Society were killed, nine of whom belonged to Mr. Reay's class, of Carville. Of two families, those of William Mason and John Bell, much might be said on the subject of suffering; *eight* persons were swept away by the calamity, four out of each. *Two* out of the four, belonging to *Bell's* family, met in the class just named. One of these read the 13th chapter of Genesis, the night before his death, repeatedly calling the attention of his mother to different portions of it, which seemed to impress his heart, saying, with filial affection, "Do you hear that, mother? Is not that

good ?” The Bible was his daily companion ; and the voice of God, in His own word, was one of the last voices that fell on the mother’s ear the night before the event, through the medium of her son,—little aware that she was so soon to hear the voice of the same Being in providence, speaking *of* that son’s death, through whom she had heard the word of life, and who was so anxious to promote her immortal interests by reading to her its sacred contents. Few things are more calculated to embalm the memory of a child than this—as a last act to a tender mother.

A still more touching case, however, occurred in the history of a boy, who was one of the principal supports of his widowed mother, and of whose conversion notice has been already taken. He was also a member of Mr. Reay’s class, and when he is stated to have been the companion of *Crister*, the name of “ the little old man ” will be immediately recollected. Thomas Ellerton had to rise early on the morning of the day on which he exchanged worlds. Being rather straightened for time, and anxious to be at the pit at the stated period, a dispute arose between breakfast and family prayer—the wants of the body and the wants of the soul—which of the two should *break its fast*. If breakfast were to be taken, there would be no time for family prayer ; and if family prayer were performed, there would be no time for breakfast. The breakfast was abandoned, and he knelt, like a little Samuel—being, as before stated, only 13 years of age, before the family altar, where he implored the Divine blessing upon himself and upon his widowed mother,

cheerfully foregoing a regular meal, rather than that the soul should not break its fast at a throne of grace. When the writer called upon the bereaved mother on the Monday, and to look at the corpse of her child as he lay in the coffin, “black but comely”—for there was great placidity about the small regular-featured countenance, he found that the first flood-tides of grief had partially subsided. But on her opening a drawer, the sluices were again in action. Anxious to cherish the least recollection of piety and church-membership, she took out a pretty little box, in which he had deposited his Society Tickets; which were to her more precious than rubies, and on which she fixed her eyes as long as she could see through her tears. These were pleasing mementos of his having belonged to the church on earth, of which the church in heaven constitutes but a part,—like two apartments in the same building—the one the ground-floor, and the other the “upper room” in the New Jerusalem. In that “upper room” his friend *Crister* and he would appear about the same moment of time,—furnishing a singular coincidence, in connexion with church-membership, having received their tickets at the same period, in the same class, and from the same hand, on the Tuesday evening;—appear like the aged Paul and the youthful Timothy—united in Christian fellowship on earth, and re-united in heaven. And what, to the writer, formed an interesting little incident, was, that he had the happiness to see the widowed mother, who was then not a member of religious society, and for whose conversion to God, her

orphan boy had often prayed, occupying his seat in the class in which he met, the first time of its meeting after the accident.

Many of the boys, and several of those of riper years, who lost their lives on the *Thursday*, had been looking forward with joy to the *Saturday* some days before. The latter of these was the day which was fixed for the Sunday Scholars, the Teachers, and several Friends, to take *tea* together. Cakes, and other necessaries were ordered, for about four hundred persons, and tea was to be served in a field adjoining the house of Mr. Reay, who, together with Mrs. Reay, had the principal management of the festive preparations. The writer had agreed to go down from Newcastle to Carville, to share in the joys of the occasion, and to deliver an address to the Teachers. Alas, the horizon was soon overcast; and that which was a sunny landscape in the distance, assumed the form of a desolate wilderness. The person who had begun to complete the order for the cakes, before any countermand could arrive, sent a considerable number of them from Newcastle; and the very cakes intended for the living children on the *Saturday*—to the no small joy of the parents, were eaten by those very parents, and others, on the *Sunday*, while the bodies of those for whom they were originally destined lay confined for the tomb in their presence; eaten, indeed—but with tears, and as with “bitter herbs” before the Lord—the religious *gala* being turned into a scene of “lamentation and woe.”*

* When some of the *hewers* were leaving the pit, about two or three

The knowledge and influence of *character*, both with regard to the religious and irreligious, was remarkable on the occasion, and shows not only the deep conviction of the necessity of personal piety which rests upon the human mind, but the preference given to those who possess it. Crowds of persons were generally near the shafts, or in their neighbourhood; and on the bodies being brought up from the pit, the pressure was sometimes considerable. Immediately on the names being announced, the buz went round,—“He was a gambler—he was a drunkard,” &c. On the reverse, as in the case of one of the Bells, it was agreeably echoed and re-echoed,—“Aye, he was a good lad that!” Thus, *character* was not only *known*, but its *value* was *felt* and *acknowledged*; and seemed to regulate the *hopes* and *fears* of the bystanders, in whose minds there was evidently a connection at the moment between the *past* and the *future*—the by-gone life and everlasting destiny of the dead.

hours before the explosion, one of them was accosted by Robert Combey, in a tone of triumphant anticipation, with—“O what a day we shall have on Saturday!” He had his enjoyment; but it was in the light of that day which “never more shall close,” and which broke upon him soon after he uttered the sentence. This young man was awakened under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Aitkin, while preaching in the New Road Chapel, Newcastle, Oct., 1834; a man who, under God, moved about at the time like a ministerial earthquake. And although it was difficult sometimes—to change the metaphor, to hear the cries of the wounded for the roar of the cannon, yet the slain of the Lord were to be found after many days; and these remained when the *noise* had passed off with the discharge of the artillery. And is permanent good to be sacrificed, to avoid a little temporary agitation, which, at most, can only offend the ear of those in whose souls even the melodies of religion have often no place?

God has a monitor within; and Christian light, in a neighbourhood where the gospel is preached, is too diffusive in its character, not to enable men on those occasions to “discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” It assumes somewhat the character of a “*last day*,” when persons do not only inadvertently sit in judgment upon others, but positively and experimentally pronounce upon themselves.

It was impossible for any one either capable of feeling, or at all disposed to reflect, to look upon the scene, or listen to the bereaved, without reaping instruction. Religion and human character unfolded themselves frequently in forms the most interesting; and not a few were the triumphs of the former. An excellent man, a Member of the Wesleyan Society, had a boy among the sufferers. The writer saw him on the Saturday at the shaft where the first explosion was heard; but had visited his residence the day before, in company with Mrs. Reay—who, like an angel of mercy, flew from family to family, to pour the balm of consolation into the newly-opened wound. While fathers, sons, and brothers, were relieving each other, in clearing away the timbers which had been shook out of their places, and choked up part of the shaft, the good man referred to, waited among others to take his turn in the perilous work. A finer picture of a CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER could scarcely be presented to the eye in humble life, than was here exhibited. He stood, or moved from place to place, as occasion required, costumed in his coarse, white flannel-jacket,

and pit-trousers,—calm, recollected, resigned, uncomplaining, and yet evidently the subject of deep feeling. For every one that spoke to him, he had an answer of meekness ; and yet a word for no one unnecessarily, or who did not interrupt the silence that reigned. Like his pattern, who was as “ a lamb before his shearers—so, opened *he* not his mouth.” He seemed to have reached the bottom of the cup of which the Psalmist drank so deeply, when he said, “ I was dumb with silence ; I held my peace, even from good ; and my sorrow was stirred. I opened not my mouth because Thou didst it.” The “ *sorrow*” that “ was *stirred*” in the bosom was never once rendered visible to the eye by the contortions of the face ; and the profoundest “ *silence*” was maintained on every subject of complaint. The stream was in motion, but it was deep and unruffled : and as noiseless as the waters of Siloa, which are characterized by the prophet as flowing “ softly.” Not a thought appeared to flit across the silent deep within, beyond—“ The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away ; blessed be the name of the Lord !” To some, his undisturbed movements—for, in the language of poetry—

“ In *his* very motion there was rest,”

might have been construed into a kind of stoical apathy, or philosophical indifference ; but this could only be the case with the few, and these—extremely hasty and superficial in their observations. He was ready for every purpose for which his aid was required—never hurried in his step—never wanting—

the agitations of the occasion never disturbing his equanimity of soul—and yet, never called away in *thought* apparently, for a single moment, from his beloved child, and the associate solemnities. There was in the midst of all a certain inflexibility of muscle about the face, where gravity sat blended with meekness and resignation; and if moved at all, only disposed to settle down to greater depths,—ready for continued and increased exercise. Thus he hovered round the fatal spot, unnoticed by any one till noticed—the hand of God sustaining him,—and ready to descend into what had recently become the region of the dead on the first summons. The class in which his name was enrolled, met in the evening of July 2d, the day fortnight following the accident. It was the first time of its meeting after the solemn event; and the writer had agreed with Mr. Reay to conduct the service, in order to relieve his feelings as the regular leader. This good man was there, with his eyes lifted upward, as though they would pierce the ceiling on their way to the skies—Heaven beaming in his countenance—hallelujah on his lips—and the love of God in his heart. There were melancholy feelings in the meeting; but not a murmur; though several were present who had sustained severe losses, and several absent, whose seats, and sayings, and characters, were touchingly alluded to, but—numbered at that moment with the blest.

Very different were the feelings and views of another good man—a member also of the Wesleyan Society, and one who had laboured to bring up his children in

the fear of God. He had *three sons* lost by the accident. Deep gloom settled on the face like a cloud; he was occasionally relieved by a deep sigh and a flood of tears; and anon he would look at the severe side—advert to second causes—and try to reason himself into the propriety of certain precautionary measures which, if employed, would have prevented the whole. The mind was brooding upon the past, instead of improving the present; and an aptitude was preceived and indulged for repelling all approach with consolation by any one, except by such persons as met his own views, and from that which was the result of his own reasonings. And yet, though unwilling to receive comfort himself, he was tender over the sufferings of his afflicted wife. One of his sons was so much disfigured by the action of the fire, that there was no possibility of recognizing him by his features. “I only knew him,” said he,—whispering to a friend, who sat by, and from whom he would receive no consolation for himself, and yet afraid lest his partner’s ear should catch the sound of his voice;—“I only knew him,” said he, “by one of the shoes which he had on his feet, having some marks by which I distinguished to whom it belonged; but,” continued he, “I durst not tell his mother *that*,” then, in a burst of agonized feeling again, he added, “that is nothing; I could bear all that, and more, if I had only an assurance of their happiness.” Here the big tears, gushing from their fountains, rolled down his cheeks.

Religion was operating in both cases, with regard to these two excellent men; but it had different subjects

to deal with, as different burthens were to be borne : still there was a depth of tender feeling in the latter, who could drink in such copious draughts of grief, and keep it pent within himself—afraid lest the partner of his bosom should obtain one drop more than that which had been unavoidably measured out to her in the course of Providence. His loss was *three* times greater than that of the former ; and considering its extent, the marvel is, that he should have borne it so ably, and that he should have such presence of mind, and such a surplus stock of sympathetic feeling to let out on the occasion for others. He had four children taken from him previously to this stroke, and now, had but one son left. Ordinary grace could never have sustained him. He still stood, however, though bent by the tempest, like the firmly rooted oak on the plain, spreading its branches to heaven ; “troubled on every side—cast down, but not destroyed ;” and was afterwards found among the foremost, praying with persons in distress, in Brunswick Place Chapel, Newcastle, on a visit of Mr. Aitkin to the place, bearing a lively recollection of the important change effected by his ministry upon his son Robert, about nine months before, for whose loss he still mourned as a father, but in whose happiness he rejoiced as a Christian.

To return to the first of these two Christian men : one circumstance was extremely painful, especially to the companion of his life. His wife felt like a mother ; and mothers only can comprehend what mothers feel. About two hours and a half after the writer had left

the mouth of the pit on the Saturday night, which would be between ten and eleven o'clock, a report was circulated that the boy was living; the tidings were instantly conveyed to the mother, who had been passing through the fire and through the water for the space of two days and a half; and every thing seemed to betoken—"This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." There was a boy marvellously preserved, as already noticed; but alas,—though good news to another, he did not belong to her! And at the moment she was preparing coffee for her own, which, to a mother, must have been a pleasing employment, he was brought a corpse to the door in a cart. However the mistake had originated, is not to state; but it added to the misery of the mother, to whom it was like a second death—placing the cup, as it were, to the lip, only for the purpose of dashing its sweets untasted to the ground—elevating the mind to an unusual height for the purpose of rendering more terrible the fall.

An excellent companion picture to the Christian philosopher, of whom a slight sketch has just been given, was a good woman, who was deprived of *two sons*. One of the young men had just been brought home on the Monday afternoon, and laid in the coffin, when the writer entered the house. The body was black, and much burnt. Several females, relatives and others, were in the separate rooms. The mother was also there, but would have been unknown, as such, to a stranger. All were either in deep distress, or much concerned, except herself. There was the

same serenity, as was evinced by the father of the boy, reported to be alive, but taken home the subject of death. In addition, however, to the breathless calm which seemed to pervade her breast, there was a certain dignified bearing in her port, of which *he* was not the master—denoting the majesty, as well as the meekness of Christianity. There was no apparent want of maternal feeling; but her own character, duty, and privileges, as a child of her Father in Heaven, seemed to possess her so fully, that all other relationships were minor, and regulated by superior considerations. “O,” said she to a friend, who knew her well, and what value to place upon her testimony, “I am sometimes almost ashamed of myself, that I cannot weep, and show more of the mother to those who are weeping around me; but God supports me so mercifully in this hour of trial, that I am borne above it.” She seemed like Fortitude personified;—the mother, and yet the Christian! the weaker vessel made strong through divine grace! solemn, but triumphant—like a martyr in the fire!

Opposed to this, was another good woman—a widow, who had lost her husband by a former blast, and a son by the present. “My *bairn*,” said she, full of tossing agony, “was no gambler, no fighter, no drunkard; he always came home sober; and if he only found his mother well, all was well: but for all that, he was not converted to God! O, his poor soul! where is it? I should be content to know, that he is happy.” All consolation was rejected here also, as in the case of the good man to whom reference has just

been made. Religion will not be satisfied with anything short of itself; and like a person receiving the power of vision, the Christian perceives dangers of which he was once insensible, becoming by his enlightenment, not only more quick-sighted, but more alive to the perils of others.

While some refused to be comforted for their children, like Rachel, because they were not, there were others with less personal piety, and with equally little ground of hope, who endeavoured to extract honey from every flower.—“My child,” said one, “was a good child. He never found fault with his mother. If he only had bread and water, he was always satisfied with it.” These are pleasing reflections; but still they do not constitute the basis upon which we are to found our hopes of heaven.

On going through the different families, sorrow was depicted in every countenance, and the circumstances in which a few were placed, were truly deplorable. A tall old woman sat in a house spare of furniture, and otherwise distinguished for deep poverty. “I lost my husband,” said she, “by a pit-accident, some time back; and now I have lost two sons, one of whom has left a *widow* and *three* small *children*, herself having been confined only *nine* days on the day of his death.” Proceeding a few doors further along the “*Row*,” the daughter-in-law,—only the *twelfth* day of her confinement, was found seated in a chair by the side of the fire, suckling her infant, with nothing but bitter reflections on the past, and blighted prospects before her.

Fathers and brothers evinced a fearlessness of danger very often, while trying to force their way to the dead ; hazarding life to reach death ; and the corpse permitted, after obtained, to remain only a few hours above ground,—each saying in effect, “ Give me a burying-place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”—One remarked, “ I bore it very well, till I came to my own son, and took him up in my arms to carry him away. There were *fourteen* lying in the same place ; he was much burnt ; but I could have *kenned* him by his make, if I had not seen a feature of his face.” A woman who had been deprived of two sons, and had secured the corpse of one of them, observed on the Monday morning, “ Had any one told me last Thursday forenoon, that I should have to pass through what I have experienced, I could not have thought it possible for any one to have borne it. I have received one ; but I want the other : O, yes, I want the bones of my child.” With some—

“ HOPE, like the glimm’ring taper’s light,
Adorns and cheers *their* way :
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray :”

But here, alas, hope was deprived of its last *ray* ;—all was *bare* ;—it amounted, in all its impenetrable gloom, only to “ the *bones* of my child ;” for more than these, the circumstances of the case would not allow her to perceive in the dim, or rather dark distance.

But even when the daring searchers had discovered

the bodies, it was, as will be seen in more instances than one, difficult to identify to whom they belonged—some of them having been claimed, not because of what they were of themselves, but because of what they had on—by the veriest trifle in dress. A very affecting example of this kind occurred on the Sabbath following the accident. An anxious father, waiting with others, at the mouth of the pit, for the body of his son, mistook, on examining the disfigured remains of those that were brought up, the corpse of another for the one for which he was seeking, in consequence of some article of clothing in which a slight similarity existed. The corpse was borne home, the convulsed feelings of a father and mother were seen in operation by its side, showers of tears were shed over it, and all the attentions were paid to it which sorrow delights—if such an expression as *delight* be admissible on such an occasion, to observe to one who had been enfolded in the warmest and inmost affections of the human soul. A short period, however, before interment, an additional shock was given to parental feeling, by the discovery, that the body over which the afflicted father and mother had poured forth their bitter wailings was the property of others,—others who were anxiously looking and longing for their own, and were only waiting for the opportunity of giving vent to similar bursts of affectionate grief, while the body of their own child, which had come up at the same moment, was lying in a coffin in the neighbourhood of the shaft unclaimed, in which situation it had remained from eleven o'clock on Saturday night till

two o'clock on the Sunday afternoon—during which, it lay in one sense unwept, and at a time when the tears, bedewing his substitute, would have been envied—if known, by those to whom that substitute belonged—themselves unaware in the interim that their's had come to light. This was one of those cases which the wisdom of a Solomon could not have reached by any experiment on parental affection, and which the guiding hand of a kind Providence at length pointed out and explained, for the mournful satisfaction of the separate families. Even among the less disfigured, the lamentation of Jeremiah might have been adopted in reference to many of them—"Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets."

CHAPTER X.

Brief Extracts from a Journal of Events—Preparations for Descent—Discoveries—Four Persons found Alive—Their State—Funeral Ceremonies—A General Visitation—Character of eight young Men and Boys—Sudden Glory—Respect paid to Crister—Position in which he was found—Thomas Reavely—Joseph Lawson—A Christian Sabbath and its Duties—Concern for the Young—Mrs. Reay—Use of the Whole—Public Sympathy—Amount and Expenditure of the Fund raised on the Occasion.

Journal.

A FEW extracts from a journal of events kept by the writer, affording a brief view of the daily progress of discovery, after the miscellaneous remarks which have preceded on the general catastrophe, will show not only the difficulties with which the searchers had to contend, but the suspense in which the different afflicted families were held.

Thursday, June 18th.—Most of the married men, as will have been perceived, had reached the day in safety; and narrow was the escape of many of both the more matured and the young. The explosion took place about two o'clock in the afternoon: and the brother of "Little Tom," so called, who suffered, had only been up about five minutes when the pit exploded. On being informed of the fact, he could scarcely give credit to it. Omitting some of the

earlier preparations for descending, it may be remarked, that no time was lost. The scene was one of deep and melancholy interest. In a shed near the G pit were several females, waiting in silent despair the result of those exertions about to be made to recover their relatives, and near them were a number of coffins. In another shed, still nearer the pit, a man was engaged in trimming, cleaning, locking, and lighting Davy lamps, to give light and security to the pitmen about to explore the mine. With these adventurous men, the shed and the space around the pit were crowded. The rain descended in torrents, but they heeded it not. All being in readiness, four men took their Davy lamps, and got into the corf. The signal was given, the machinery set in motion, and instantly they were out of sight. The operation was repeated until about twenty-eight men had descended. There was no hesitation with any of them: the competition rather seemed to be, which should go down first. All was, however, conducted in silence, except the hoarse voice of the banksman giving the necessary signals.—No bodies found.

Friday, 19th.—In the course of this day, several of the men and boys were found, and by four o'clock in the afternoon William, Crister was brought up, whose lifeless form was presented to his family and friends. He was found in the workings between Carville and Wall's End Church, just a little to the west of the Shields road, beneath one of the adjoining fields. The person who first discovered him, knew him by looking at his back, as he lay on the ground,

with seven or eight persons lying beside him. Mr. Mann, who had given him his Society Ticket on the Tuesday evening, was at the shaft at the time he was brought up, and the writer followed almost immediately. Whenever a body was brought to bank, there was a rush of spectators to the pit mouth. The females eagerly joined the throng, but instantly retired without a word, on perceiving that the body was one to which they had no claim.—21 bodies were found in the course of the day.

Saturday, 20th.—It was not till the afternoon of this day, that the writer visited the widow of poor Crister. The latter lay in his coffin. There was a slight graze below one eye, occasioned probably by the fall; and a slight purple was stealing over the face, the features of which expressed a perfect calm.

The writer was at the shaft next the church, in company with Mr. Leppington and Mr. Reay, till between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. But it was not till between ten and eleven that the tidings reached the top, that four persons were found alive. Late as was the hour, crowds of persons were upon the ground, it being the shaft which first exploded, and the one which had been partially choked with timber. When the people heard of the living below, the dead—numerous as they were, and painful as were the circumstances, appeared to be forgotten; they jumped, they sang, they shouted, and were in a perfect delirium of joy. On the first two being brought to the bank—the boy and Reed, the crowd broke in, at the peril of being precipitated down the shaft, as well as

injuring the exhausted sufferers, and carried them some distance in the large wicker basket, in which the coals are brought to the day. The basket, with its iron trapping—more fit for a cart and horse, than the persons that could conveniently attach themselves to it, was borne off with the apparent ease of a piece of plaited straw. Joy of heart seemed to string every nerve. Even the sufferings of the four persons—when all safely brought up, were partially lost, in the exultations over the remaining spark of life, which the spectators hoped would soon be briskened into joyous animation, by the same Providence that had preserved them, and now seemed to accost them in the emphatic language of Zechariah, “I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit.”

Though the persons thus rescued from destruction, were the subjects of occasional delirium, their broken tale, as far as it could be collected, was one of deep interest. They had gone down the pit, on the morning of Thursday, about five o'clock, and had thus been underground, at a depth of 145 fathoms, for sixty-five hours—and as the explosion took place at two in the afternoon of Thursday, they had been literally entombed alive for fifty-six hours of the above period. Two of them, when taken out, were delirious, and gave incoherent and improbable accounts of what had transpired; another had his leg so fractured as to render immediate amputation indispensable; the fourth had his hands and face scorched, but was perfectly sensible.

John Brown, the most intelligent of the survivors,

was at the bottom of the shaft of the G or Church Pit when the accident took place. He was what is called an "Onsetter," his duty being to fix the hook at the end of the rope upon the corves of coals previous to their being drawn up from the mine. He stated, that he was in the act of performing this duty, when the pit—what he called—"fired." He had not the slightest apprehension of danger, and he stated that he had no fear of working in the mine. The blast which came through the pit knocked him down, and he fell with his side upon the tram or rolley, used for bringing the corves of coals. Near him was the little boy named Martin Middleton, and at a short distance the other two men. How long he lay insensible he was not able to conjecture; but when he recovered sufficiently to reflect, he knew that a "blast" had occurred in the pit. The lights were, of course, "extinguished" by the foul air, and on groping about, the first thing he discovered was, that the horse, within a few yards of him, had been killed, either by the blast of fire or the after-damp. He eventually discovered the boy and the other two men. He got some water and refreshed himself and them. One of the men was already delirious; he talked of his wife and his home, and insisted upon stripping his clothes off, under an impression that he was going to bed. Thus he lay upon the floor of the mine; and the poor sufferers continued in this state of living death, until the happy hour of deliverance. The individuals thus miraculously preserved, did not appear to have suffered from hunger. Brown thought it

might be some time about the middle of Friday, when he became a little recollected, and concluded at first, that it must have been a long and a dark night through which he had passed, since he first fell asleep. J. Reed was in the cabin, and it was Brown's opinion, that he must have been driven against the side of it, to occasion the fracture.

When the boy was discovered, he was in a state of nudity. He told his father, that he felt himself so hot after he had got burned, that he threw his clothes off, in order to cool himself. He was heard at the distance of twenty yards singing hymns; a circumstance which, in those doleful regions, and at that particular moment, must have produced strange emotions in those who heard him. He had been a Sunday Scholar at Carville, and had been exceedingly refractory. But his songs and his instructions came to his aid, to cheer him in the time of need; and he told J. Green soon after he was found, that he would be a good boy in future, and that his father should never have occasion to flog him again for not going to school. The hymn he was singing when he was found was—"When I was a stranger, Jesus took me in," &c.—44 bodies found to-day.

Sunday, 21st.—This morning poor John Reed had to undergo the amputation of his broken limb.—Among other bodies discovered, that of Wm. Crister, jun. was one; and the father remained uninterred till the afternoon of this day, that both might be laid in the same tomb. The excitement which existed in the neighbourhood of the mine, cannot easily be described.

In the afternoon, when the writer visited the place, in company with Mr. R. Wilson, of Newcastle, the whole face of that part of the country was crowded with human beings, to attend and witness the funerals of those whose bodies had been recovered. There was scarcely a house whose door-way, and whose interior, was not filled with mourners; the public meanwhile weeping in sympathy with them. Cart after cart, with two and three coffins in each, attended by dense crowds, followed in long succession to the Wall's End burying-ground. After prayer and singing, the writer and his friend, with multitudes more, attended the corpse of poor Crister. It was melancholy music.

It may not be uninteresting to describe the ceremonies, or customs, which preceded interment in most instances, and which, it is understood, are prevalent throughout the pit districts. When death has occurred, two young men go round the neighbourhood, apprising the inhabitants that such-a-one is dead, and requesting their presence at the funeral at the time appointed. The young men who perform this service are called "askers." At the time appointed, the people invited proceed to the house of the deceased, dressed in their holiday clothes, and sit down. On the table is placed a cheese, and a supply of bread and ale. Portions of these are handed to the visitors by two young women dressed in mourning, who are called "servers," and it is not unusual for the men to indulge in a pipe of tobacco in addition. This custom is, however, observed in silence, and with a solemnity

and decorum befitting the melancholy occasion. When all the visitors have been "served," the coffin, containing the body, is brought to the door, and placed upon chairs. A hymn is then sung, after which it is borne to the grave preceded by the "askers," with black scarfs over their dress, and the "servers," with white hoods. After the body follow those who mourn for the deceased, and the attendants bring up the rear. In the present melancholy instance, as has been observed, the bodies were taken to the grave in carts, but a black pall was, in each instance, thrown over the coffin. In some cases three were taken from one house, and the scenes of distress—the lamentation and woe—visible in every direction, it was impossible to view unmoved. The coffins were furnished by the owners of the mine, who also contributed £1 in addition, for the interment of each body. The joiners were engaged on this, as on other days, in making coffins, and carts were employed in conveying them from house to house.—30 of the sufferers brought up during the day.

Monday, 22nd.—This day was devoted by the writer, in connection with Mrs. Reay and Mr. Leppington, to the work of visiting from house to house, in order to sympathize, pray, or converse with the bereaved families, as their cases might need.—Three out of the four who had escaped on Saturday were seen, viz., Moralee, Reed, and Middleton. The faces of the old man and the boy were invisible, resembling balls of raw cotton, with which article they were covered, in consequence of their having been so much burnt.

The *old man* spoke a little ; and while in the act of speaking, the voice seemed as though it proceeded from an Egyptian Mummy, swathed before the eye. The *boy* was dozing a little, but pert and incoherent when awake. *J. Reed* was recollected, grateful to God for his deliverance, though with the loss of a limb ; and adverted to the loss of his two sons with deep feeling. The families who had buried their dead, were, in some instances, in deep gloom, and unable to weep, as though the fountains had been exhausted. Those who had their dead lying before them were often affected in a way it is difficult to describe ; and those who had not received the objects of their wishes, were looking for relief in that which was calculated only to increase their agony.—Poor Reed was like one of those of whom it is said, “ he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken ; ” he was only destined to live a short time—there was no escape ; he was spared till July 4th, when he breathed his last.

On the afternoon of this day, about sixty bodies were conveyed, in carts, to the parish church, where they were interred ; and towards evening, the whole of the bodies had been brought up, with the exception of about fourteen. Wall's End Church stands above the workings of the colliery ; so that, in taking into account the situations of the shafts, the “ graves,” like those of Ashur, were literally “ set in the sides of the pit.”

This general visitation had an influence beyond that of exciting a mere feeling of sympathy. On such occasions, the vicious and the ill-instructed, very often

show their antipathy to their superiors, and seek to benefit themselves at the expense of the property and character of others, by exciting prejudice and creating disturbance. Mr. Buddle expressed his surprize and pleasure at the manner in which the men conducted themselves, and the patience with which the calamity was borne; but added, to the gentleman to whom he was speaking, "I understand the Wesleyan Ministers have taken great pains in visiting the families." Without attempting to take any credit beyond sheer duty, the writer could not but rejoice in the liberality of the sentiment, expressed by one who is respected as an authority and as a man of talent.—5 found.

Tuesday, 23rd.—Some of the young persons belonging to Bell's family were buried, and only one was supposed now to be in the pit.

Wednesday, 24th.—One still remained below on the evening of this day; and of all that had been found, not one had suffered through any fall of stone or coal from the roof of the workings. The one remaining was a boy, and was not found till August 12th.

Crister and his Christian Brethren.

Having taken a general view of the calamity, in the course of which references have been made to particular persons, it may be proper to advert more especially to the Christian character, with any other incidental notice, of the companions of Crister. The following were members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society :—

MEN.

1. Joseph Lawson.
2. William Crister, Sen.
3. Thomas Reavley.

YOUNG MEN AND BOYS.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Robt. Combey, joined Society, | Jan., 1834. |
| 2. John English, | do. Jan., 1834. |
| 3. Wm. Crister, jun., | do. April, 1834. |
| 4. Thomas Ellerton, | do. May, 1834. |
| 5. John Hall, | do. May, 1834. |
| 6. C. J. Waggett, | do. May, 1834. |
| 7. Robert Bell, | do. June, 1834. |
| 8. Richard Bell, | do. Oct., 1834. |

Not to select one, or more, from the list of the *juvenile* part of the sufferers, for the purpose of further observation, one subject, which is applicable to all, and which cannot but afford unspeakable pleasure, is, that—on the testimony of their leader, who watched

over them with tenderness and godly jealousy, not an individual among them ever disgraced his Christian profession after his union with the Wesleyan body. From their upright walk, therefore, collectively, before the world, and their repeated declarations of a growth in grace, there is strong ground to believe, that as they all united themselves in a covenant to God, and entered the militant church, the same year, they were all admitted into heaven the same day—nay, saw each other there the same *hour*. O, what a thought! in a coal-pit and in heaven, with only the interval of a few minutes between! With these, as with Crister, it was emphatically, “down to death and up to glory.” The pit proved the tomb of each; they descended into it living human beings, and came up glorified spirits,—glorified, though invisible,—for, in the exquisitely wrought musings of Montgomery,—

“The dead are like the stars by day,
—Withdrawn from mortal eye,
But not extinct, they move their way
In glory through the sky;
Spirits from bondage thus set free,
Vanish amidst immensity,
Where human thought, like human sight,
Fails to pursue their trackless flight.”

Though the members of the Establishment are taught to pray against “sudden death,” and there is something terrific in it to the by-stander, as well as hazardous to the sufferer, yet on overstepping the grave—on rendering blank the space between, there is

something still more transcendant and exhilarating in *sudden glory*. “For we know,” says the apostle, “that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.” No sooner is the soul dismissed the body, and so left naked, than the house from heaven comes instantly upon it, and clothes it. “We *have*,” it is said—intimating it to be so *sudden* in its operation, that we seem already to triumph in its possession. And this sense is confirmed by the context, where the inspired penman shows, that to be *absent* from the body is to be *present* with the Lord. There are some people who conceive of heaven, as though it were far beyond the sun—some hundreds of millions of miles from the earth; and this leads to other notions equally remote and absurd, as though it would take a considerable portion of time to reach the abodes of the blessed, and there would be some danger of the soul missing its way, when let loose, so to speak, into the immense regions of space, without the protection of some well-experienced angelic guide. A writer of the last century illustrates this subject by the apt simile of a lamp concealed beneath an earthen vessel, and suddenly emerging from its hiding-place. Let the interior of a spacious building be supposed to be illuminated—say, with nine hundred and ninety-nine lamps, all mingling together in one general blaze. Let an additional lamp be supposed to be concealed, as stated, beneath a black earthen pitcher, brittle in its nature, and mean in its appearance. A person, who enters the apartment, is

enraptured with the splendour of the scene—perceives the inverted vessel in a corner—and enquires why it is placed there? when he is informed, that it awaits the removal of any one who may feel so disposed. The person goes—places his foot against it—when it instantly breaks. The moment, however, the covering is removed, the lamp—before invisible, and beneath it, mingles with the general blaze. So soon as the one is demolished, the other appears; there is scarcely an intermediate space between the pitcher breaking, and the lamp uniting its lambent flame with those shedding their light around it. Just so with a disembodied spirit. Death no sooner deals his blow, than the “earthen vessel,” or the finer porcelain clay, falls in pieces, and the soul, which is “the candle of the Lord,” or, as it may be rendered, “the lamp of Jehovah,” immediately enters the temple above—mingles with “the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven”—with “the spirits of just men made perfect.” The child of God stands on the very threshold of heaven;—another step, and he is in glory. O, yes,

“Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments.”

Of *William Crister*, senior, little need be added to what has been advanced; for it will have appeared, that of all that were borne hence by the flood of *fire* and *damp*—and there were of the devout both old and young, not any of them had acquired the same degree

of prominence in society, or occupied the same place in the public mind as himself. He seemed to sit enthroned in the affections of all who knew him : and his position was maintained to the close of his days, as it had been at first secured—by piety. In different instances, on the family going to purchase articles for the funeral, the persons of whom the purchases were intended to be made, refused to receive payment, stating, as they were in memory of Crister, they felt a pleasure—though a melancholy one, of furnishing them gratis ; while others, less able, had to pay for the whole of the refreshments furnished on the occasion. Such was the respect paid to his memory, that many of the friends from Newcastle, Shields, and the neighbouring places, visited the house to see the lifeless clay, which, when animated, had yielded them such pleasure to behold. So true it is, as “ the Lord God of Israel saith—them that honour me I will honour.” Homer assigns as the reason Patroclus was universally lamented—“ He knew how to be good-natured to all men.” The Northumbrian Miner proceeded further in Christianity than Heathenism could conduct its votaries. He was not only kind and inoffensive, but devout and useful. As a man of peace, he was generally beloved ; persons who cherished their prejudices and little antipathies against the Wesleyan body, indulged none against Crister ; he was not one of those who was hawked and torn by the malevolent ; and if he happened, in the fidelity of his doings, to come across the worst part of human nature, in any one, such were the amiable qualities that he otherwise

displayed, that every feeling of resentment was instantly subdued. No one could be found to say, "Let burning coals fall upon *him*; let *him* be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that *he* rise not up again."

One circumstance connected with his death, hitherto unnoticed, ought not to be omitted. He was first discovered among the slain of the Lord by a person of the name of John Green. Like "the captive exile," he had been "hastening that he should not die in the pit." Several were lying beside him where he was stretched upon the ground with his face downward,—his elbows doubled,—and his hands, with the palms outward, spread abroad like a fan, immediately before his chest, as he was wont to expand them, when engaged in prayer, or speaking on the subject of personal religion. A female observing this, after he had been conveyed home, and knowing his devotional attitude, exclaimed—"Why, he looks as if he were praying down to the very hands yet!" Thus they had stiffened; and it was in this exercise, he, no doubt, closed his life—running into the jaws of the very death from which he was fleeing, but showing, in the words of the "Christian Poet" already quoted—and whose writings will be found in the church of God to the end of time, that

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watch-word at the gate of death;
He enters heaven with prayer."

Thomas Reavley—another of the Wesleyan group.

was born at Carville, in the year 1801. He entered, at an early period, the Sabbath school established in that place among the Wesleyans; and there received impressions which were never afterwards obliterated, and instructions which aided him in his Christian course. On one occasion during his scholarship, he was induced to act the truant with some other boys. The teacher of course visited him, in order to ascertain the cause of absence. No sooner did poor Thomas see him, than his conscience smote him: he was ashamed, condemned, and stood rebuked before his instructor, but gave his pledge never more to absent himself wilfully, which pledge he maintained inviolate. It was not, however, till some time about 1823, when he had become a husband and a father, that he first gave himself to God, and then to the church by the will of God. He had stood proof some years against the dictates of conscience, and against the remonstrances and advices of his best friends. When he became a father, the responsibility of that relationship dwelt with deep weight upon his mind. The seed sown in the Sunday School began to put forth the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. Every child was beheld in the light of an important trust received from God. He saw that he could not discharge the duty of a parent unless he himself possessed personal piety. Instruction and example were necessary in his early teachers, and equally so in himself. In his concern for his offspring, his concern for himself deepened; and he at length became a decided Christian, exhibiting an example worthy the

imitation of others. The spirit of piety in him was not a transient blaze, but a steady flame;—not an occasional impulse, but an uniform principle, enabling him to abound in the work of the Lord. As a suitable return for what he had received at the Sunday School, and from a desire to promote the happiness of the rising generation, he became a useful and laborious teacher himself, and a constant attendant on the Sabbath morning prayer meeting, in order to implore the blessing of God on the labours of the day. His Christian experience was always simple and profitable; and in his class, he generally expressed his assurance of the Divine favour, accompanied with a grateful sense of His daily mercies. His mind, some time previous to his death, was unusually elevated, both with present enjoyments and future prospects,—as his prayers also, in the public meetings, had been distinguished for their fervour. On the Sabbath morning, prior to the catastrophe, he made some remarks in his class on the uncertainty of life, and the dangers to which he was exposed in his calling, closing with an assurance, that whatever became of the body, *the soul was safe*. If we are to entertain a doubt of the eternal safety of such men as these, where shall “the ungodly and the sinner appear!” God will never forsake the panting racer heaving his last breath—the weary pilgrim taking his last step—the aged warrior in his last struggle!

Joseph—the peaceable *Joseph Lawson*, comes up like a patriarch in the rear. He was born at Colli ry

Dykes, in the county of Durham, in the year 1772, and was—as far as such a thing can be, a Wesleyan by descent, his parents having both been members of Society for many years. In some memoranda penned by himself, he observes, “ When I was a boy, my parents took me to hear the Methodist preachers on the Sabbath : for when I was left at home at any time, I was sure to profane it. The good spirit of the Lord strove with me often, and showed me that I was wrong ; then I was afraid of going to hell. My parents being poor, I was sent very early in life to work ; I had consequently a very limited education. This I have often had to deplore.”

He proceeds, “ in 1789, the family went to work at Bigge's-Main. We at first lived at Ouseburn. It was a bad place for me, and it was well that we resided there only about a year. We returned to Colliery Dykes ; at which place a Sunday School was begun in 1790, to which I was sent, and began to learn my A—B, *abs.* A short time after this, we removed to Wall's End Colliery. Here I entered into the marriage state, with a steady, careful, industrious young woman. The Lord blessed our industry, and we did very well. After this, we removed to Colliery Dykes again. The Lord was at that time working very powerfully upon my mind ; chiefly occasioned by a very narrow escape from imminent danger in the pits, in connexion with four other men. I was afraid of both body and soul, and went to hear a sermon one Sunday in the Methodist chapel, under which I felt my

mind much drawn out after God. Again we were removed to Wall's End Colliery. This was the beginning of good days to my soul."

In speaking more immediately of those "good days," he says, "I attended the means of grace at both church and chapel, till I was at length afraid to go to bed without family prayer. I had no intention of joining the Methodists at first, for I thought I could save myself in the church, as well as among them. One night, however, I dreamed that I was dying, and that my wife was standing over me, waiting to see me depart. I felt conscious that devils would come and drag away my soul. I then thought I heard a voice, saying, 'Go to a Methodist preacher.' When I awoke, that portion of scripture came forcibly to my mind, 'For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' I embraced the first opportunity of going to chapel, and heard the late Rev. J. Doncaster preach on, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments." This was about the year 1802. I joined the society, being fully sensible that I was a lost sinner, who needed pardon. At first, however, I could not believe, and thought it impossible for any one to know his sins forgiven. But on hearing the Rev. Joseph Benson, my views were altered. I prayed

earnestly for it; and one day, as I was returning home from Newcastle—praying and believing, I received the blessing of pardon. For the space of four or five years, I went on my way rejoicing. The Lord was kind to me,—carrying me in his arms, and scarcely permitting Satan to tempt me.”

In this account we perceive the workings of a simple, sincere mind; and his simplicity, as his subsequent life attested, was not an amiable silliness, but that which might be supposed to characterise the “beloved disciple” in mellow age. Joseph, after a five years’ walk of peace and joy, was called to pass through the fire, both as to personal and family affliction. He was married twice; and shortly after the death of his first wife, he was unable, through severe indisposition, to attend to his labour for the space of several weeks. His oldest boy was capable of work; and some of his friends knowing his circumstances, urged him to send another, about six years of age, to the pit. “No,” he returned, “I am a poor man; I have nothing to give to my family but an *education*: and *that*, they *shall* have, if possible.” To educate them, however, solely with a view to fill useful or important stations in civil society, was not his object. He was attentive both to mind and morals, and was chiefly solicitous to educate them for eternity. His manner of maintaining the sanctity of the Sabbath, is worthy of imitation; and it is encouraging to find, in a family so large, how effective were all his admonitions on the subject.

During the last twenty years of his life, the following

observances distinguished the SABBATH OF GOD in his family. Exclusive of his own private devotions and readings, a hymn was sung and prayer was offered up after breakfast. Being a teacher, he then proceeded to the Sunday School, with as many of the children as were able to walk—all washed and decently attired; a picture on which the Saviour would have smiled, had he passed in person, and which could not but have his approval in Heaven! The forenoon having been devoted chiefly to religious instruction, he returned home with his lovely charge to dinner. Aware that Sunday Schools only accomplish half their object, unless they lead to *worship*, he conducted them to the house of God in the afternoon, where they all heard a Sermon. To render this more effectual, and by way of keeping up a connexion in the mind between the homestead and the temple—between religion at home and religion abroad, the chapter was read in the family out of which the text had been taken,—a hymn was sung,—and prayer again arose, like incense to the throne of God. On this occasion he prayed for the children *individually*, and adverted with peculiar feeling to their state, conduct, and circumstances. Chapel was again resorted to in the evening, where a second Sermon was heard; and the hallowed day was closed, by the family group, encircling the domestic altar, where the father and priest of the house, devoutly thanked his Maker for bringing him “a Sabbath day’s journey nearer Heaven.” Burns has sung the “Cotters’ Saturday Night,” and Grahame has sung the “Sabbath,” but neither of them have adorned their muse with a

picture equal to this for simplicity, purity, and spirituality.

A man, like this, was in no danger of being suspected of being a mere "*eye-servant*." He was as much distinguished for his fidelity and devotion to the interests of his employers as to his God. In all his ways, both as to his civil and religious duties, he was remarkable for *order* in their observance, *punctuality* as to time, and a mild, peaceable demeanour, in their discharge. He, like Thomas Reavley, the Sabbath before the accident, spoke in the class of the happiness he had experienced that morning while engaged in family prayer: and his leader having to leave before the meeting was concluded, he was left to close the service..

There is a circumstance connected with the death of good old Joseph, which, while it renders it exceedingly painful, shows the imperfection of human foresight, and the way in which the providence and works of God often thwart the benevolent designs of man. He was what is termed, a deputy overman, and was in one of the most dangerous parts of the mine, situated about 500 yards east of the G pit shaft, or shaft which first exploded. Having heard the explosion in a distant part of the mine, while attending to his duty, and disdaining to seek safety in flight, so long as his young charge were exposed to danger, the obvious conjecture is, that he had, with all the order and prudence peculiar to him, hastily collected the Davy lamps—hurried the older boys before him through the mine, "upon" whom were "fear, and the pit, and

a snare,"—and taking two of the lesser ones by the hand, proceeded with all possible expedition towards the shaft. In this way he had travelled between three and four hundred yards from the place of gathering, and when within only about one hundred and sixty yards from the base of the shaft—a place of probable safety, he was met by the "*after-damp*," which at once put a period to his fears, his hopes, and his toils. There he was found, with eight boys and nine young men—two of the youngest on each side—two immediately behind, whose strength had apparently failed—and the remainder in front of him—unscorched;—thus surrounded in death by several of those whom he had taught in the Sunday School in life, and who, through his tuition, had been directed the most ready way—whether in the moment of peril or security, to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And who can tell, in minds previously instructed and powerfully impressed with wholesome truth, what "the upward glancing of the eye," might effect, when the compassionate gaze of a Redeemer, caught the last, piercing look of the sufferer—in which look the whole soul was lodged, and on its way upward! Joseph fell like a shepherd, solicitous for the safety of his flock, in the hour of danger; and near him lay, not only the boys, but the lamps which they had used for the purposes of their occupation, and which it had been one of his last acts to collect! Here they were literally "gathered together," in the language of Isaiah, "as prisoners are gathered in the pit;" and though "shut up" in

death, the hand that closed the door, held the key of heaven.

Had not the shaft been choked with timber, to which he was hastening, the possibility at least existed, of deliverance; and this is one of the circumstances which render the death of so brave and humane a man, so painful. When the progress downward was impeded by the timbers which had been shook out of their place by the explosion, the first expedient that occurred to Mr. Reay was, to secure a blacksmith's *anvil*, suspend it over the mouth of the pit, let it drop and so force a passage to the bottom. But here two obstacles were presented; first, the possibility of some of the men being alive below, and being killed by its fall; and secondly, the probability of dashing against the side of the cast-iron tubbing, so bursting it, and inundating the pit. It was not till one o'clock, therefore, on Monday morning, that the good old man was discovered; and when the writer saw him in his shroud and in his coffin, in his own house, on the forenoon of the same day, in company with Mrs. Reay* and Mr. Leppington, he looked more like a

* Since then, this excellent woman has entered the world of spirits. As a memoir of her is contemplated, and this is not the place for any lengthened notice, the writer—as an incentive to a devout life in the interim, may be allowed a few observations on her triumphant end.

Though Mrs. Reay had been gradually declining in health for some time, and spoke of it with Christian resignation, yet it was not till the morning of December 25th, 1836, that she was seized with a violent spasmodic action of the heart, which indicated organic disease, and threatened the speedy termination of her valuable life.

She seemed to meet her last affliction like a skilful and experienced

venerable apostle placidly sunk into a state of slumber, than a person in the arms of death ;—his excellent widow, surrounded by the family and friends in

commander, who, when no enemy is visible, maintains a vigilant watch, and warily turns his eye in every direction, lest the foe should be lying in ambush, ready to spring up in an unexpected moment, and from an unexpected quarter ; and thus prepared at every step and at every point for the appearance and onset of the assailant. But in this, she was more under the influence of suspicion than of fear ; she knew in whom she believed, and while her confidence in God removed all doubt and anxiety, she knew also, that for the exercise of that confidence, and ultimately to advance its strength, she might still be permitted to be assailed by an unslumbering and malignant adversary.

The Rev. S. Broadbent visited her, Monday, Jan. 16, 1837.—She had been blessed but with little repose during the night, and was extremely feeble. On seeing Mr. B., she said, in a subdued tone, “I am just on the brink of the river.” He replied appropriately, “You know, when the Israelites were about to pass Jordan, the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant, went before ; and when their feet were dipped in the brim of the river, though it had previously overflowed all its banks, the waters stood, and rose upon an heap, until the people had passed over : and your Great High Priest will go before *you*, and lead *you* to the promised land.” Her spirit revived at this, and clasping her hands, she said, “O yes, I trust He will :—He *is* with me.” While Mr. B. was engaged in prayer, she added to every petition, her devout and fervent, “Amen.”

The last time the writer saw her, was on the morning of the 18th, being the Wednesday before she died—and after an acquaintance of upwards of 30 years. On entering the room with the family for domestic worship, she appeared to be extremely weak, as she sat partially propped up in bed, with the lower part of the face reclining on the breast. But in the midst of great languor and debility, there was great clearness of perception, a mild expression in the eye, and a settled composure of feature, which spoke the holy calm of a Sabbath within. This led the writer to pray especially for a continuance of the quiet so apparent—that it might resemble the unruffled stream—full, and deep, and clear, peacefully pursuing its pilgrimage to the ocean. Her responses, though feeble, were frequent, and uttered in a way that communicated an indescribable feeling to the heart. On rising, and going to the couch, she stretched out her hand, and with an intonation of voice in accordance with the subject expressed, she breathed softly into the ear, while gently raising her head,—“Sweet Peace !” adding, “He will stand me.”

an adjoining room, mourning like a Christian, and meekly observing,—“It is kind of you to come to see me.”

Saturday, 21st,—Her old and endeared friend, and bandmate, Mrs. Coulthard, of Gateshead, visited her. Though she had visited Mrs. R. a few days prior to this, yet the latter felt her weakness to be such, that she was afraid she could scarcely support another interview. At length, she said,—“Well, I will close my eyes, and I shall probably be less affected.” Mrs. C. softly entered the chamber, and though invisible to her friend, they pressed hands, and communed with God and each other in spirit. During a brief pause, she who was sick, and whom Jesus loved, might have inwardly said, in the language of Montgomery on the Death of Reynolds:—

“This place is holy ground;
World, with thy cares, away!
Silence and darkness reign around,
But, lo! the break of day:
What bright and sudden dawn appears,
To shine upon this scene of tears?”

And her friend might have responded in the next stanza, while sitting by the side of the couch:—

“’Tis not the morning light,
That wakes the lark to sing;
’Tis not a meteor of the night,
Nor track of angel’s wing:
It is an uncreated beam,
Like that which shone on Jacob’s dream.”

It was, indeed, to employ a metaphor of the same divine son of song, a moment when Eternity met with Time, and when “a scale sublime,” extending “from heaven to earth, rested on either sphere.” Mrs. C., in a divine extacy, softly uttered,—“Glory,—glory,—the room is full of heaven:” while her friend, in darkness as to this world—her eyes being still closed, was all light within, enjoying a vision of glory in her soul—the full day-break of Eternity, being ready to burst upon her; meanwhile, feebly waiving her hand, in token of triumph.

In the evening of the same day, Mr. Reay went into the room with the family for prayer. When he knelt, he paused—faltered—and then was

Taking a view of the solemn event, as a whole, it must be evident to all who are disposed to improve

as dumb before the Lord. A general sob, though partially smothered, was heard. Just at that moment—though previously in the lowest state of weakness, Mrs. Reay rose from her pillow—apparently invigorated in soul and in body for the occasion, and with promptitude, firmness, and energy, accompanied with a piercing glance of the eye, exclaimed—“John, that won’t do,—that won’t do.” He instantly felt rebuked—resigned all to God—and in the genuine spirit of prayer, poured out his spirit at the throne of grace, in which she devoutly joined.

Towards the whole of the close of the affliction which removed her hence, she was mercifully preserved from pain. Indeed, as general prostration of strength crept on, all painful effects subsided; in reference to which, she remarked to the writer, “It is all mixed with mercy.” She continued sinking—almost imperceptibly sinking, to the close; being such a wasting as was to be perceived by the week rather than the day; thus giving reality to what otherwise is often mere poetry, even in “The Death of the Righteous,” owing to painful associate circumstances, and leading the mournful attendants to soothe each other with—

“Sweet is the scene when nature dies,
When sinks a righteous soul to rest;
Now mildly beam the closing eyes,
Now gently heaves th’ expiring breast.

“So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o’er,
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies the wave upon the shore.”

Her end was like a beautiful but calm sun-set on a summer evening;—the sun setting beneath the horizon, indeed,—but to rise more resplendent in another hemisphere: verifying the language of the “Christian Poet,”—

“—— Life so sweetly ceased to be,
It lapsed in immortality.”

Thus closed the scene with Mrs. Dorothy Reay, of Carville, January 22, 1837, in the 37th year of her Christian pilgrimage—the 28th year of her office, as the leader of a female class—and in the 56th year of her natural life;—entering, on the Sabbath of God, upon her eternal rest.—“Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!”

the subject, that God has arisen, on the occasion, out of His place, and intends it as one of his manifestations to the NEIGHBOURHOOD. The language of the prophet may be appropriately quoted, “ The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, who hath appointed it.” The broad scale on which the work of destruction was carried on, is proof sufficient, that God aimed at nothing short of general *impression*; and the conclusion is, that it should be succeeded by a general *reformation*. He has kindled a fire, and like Jerusalem of old, has “ set ” the neighbourhood “ upon the coals ;” but it is in order to purify it.

To the immediate *friends* and *relatives* of the sufferers, the Divine Being speaks still more loudly. The voice of his judgments from afar, is, alas, but too often heard in soft whispers.—*Distance* produces, both with regard to *time* and *place*, the same effect upon the *mind*, that a remote sound has upon the *ear*. Hence, the destruction of a world by water—of the cities of the plain by fire—and of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by a purposely-wrought earth-quake, can be read without emotion. But when God enters the *vicinity* in which we reside, or the *home* in which we live, then is certainly the time, above all others, for bowing with reverence while He is passing by in the storm, and for profiting by the traces He has left, whether of mercy or of judgment. He never speaks, but to be heard ; never manifests Himself, but to be seen ; and this event calls for humiliation, resignation, watchfulness, and amendment.—“ Therefore be ye also ready ;

for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh !”

It would be improper to omit noticing, as it will be gratifying to know, the public sympathy awakened on the occasion. The following is a summary of the leading circumstances connected with the sufferers, survivors, and fund—the names and more minute particulars of the former being reserved for the Appendix :

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Total number of men and boys—dead	..						103
Remaing alive	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
							<hr/>
							106

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Women deprived of their husbands	..						14
Children dependent upon these 14 widows							40
Widowed mothers deprived of their sons							8
Number of families affected by the stroke							61
Children capable of working in the families							5
Children unemployed	..	..	..	..	..	..	56
Boys under eight years of age	..						8
Girls under do.	..	..	..	..	..	..	12

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Amount subscribed by the Owners and							
the Public	..	..	..	..	..	..	£2009 13 4
Paid the first year	..	£442	3	0			
Paid the second year		£293	18	0			
Balance in hand, Oct.,							
1837	..	£1268	12	9			
		s	3				

The Fund expected to last about 9 years.

* * * * *

Allowed to each parent who had lost a son,

immediately after the calamity	£2	0	0
Weekly allowance to widows	0	2	6
Do. for each child under 9 years of age	0	1	0

APPENDIX.

Note B; METHODISM IN ITS RISE AND PROGRESS IN THE TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

(PAGE 1.)

THOUGH Mr. Wesley notices his first visit to Newcastle in his Journal, and a few circumstances connected with it, yet it was not till fourteen months after, that he related the *occasion* which led to it; and even then only incidentally, in a letter to the Mayor of the town. The letter itself was never published. A copy of it was transcribed by Thomas Marriott, Esq., and handed to the writer, which, as a Wesleyan curiosity—and interesting to the Societies in the North, may here be presented to the reader. It may be proper to remark, that Mr. Wesley visited Newcastle in the month of July, 1743, on the 10th of which month, he remarks, (Works, vol. I., p. 423), “ Sunday, I preached on ‘ *Why will ye die,*’ &c.” In consequence of some disturbance at the time, he received a message from the Mayor, to which he wrote the following reply :

“ July 12, 1743.

“ MR. MAYOR,

“ A message was delivered to me yesterday in the street by one at the head of a crowd of people, to this effect :—
‘ Mr. Mayor being informed of the tumult you raised on Sunday, discharges you from preaching at the Sand-Hill any more.’

“ I reverence all Magistrates, as the Ministers of God. Therefore, at the Sand Hill, I will preach no more.—This is my answer to you as a Magistrate. But, will you not pardon me,

Sir, if I add a few words, not as one accused to a judge, but as one reasonable man speaking to another? When I was first prest by the Countess of Huntingdon, to go and preach to the Colliers in, or near Newcastle, that objection immediately occurred; 'Have they not Churches and Ministers already?' It was answered, 'They have Churches; but they never go to them! and Ministers, but they seldom or never hear them! Perhaps they may hear *you*. And what if you save (under God) but one soul?' I yielded. I took up my cross and came. I preached Jesus the Saviour of sinners. Many sinners of all sorts came and heard. Many were (and are) saved from their sins. The drunkards are sober. The common swearers fear God. The Sabbath-breakers now keep that day holy. These facts are undeniable; the persons being well known, and ready at any time to attest them.—Last week, I was informed, that abundance of Sabbath-breakers and drunkards used to wander about the Sand-Hill on Sunday evenings. Immediately my heart burned within me to call those sinners also to repentance. I came; and, nothing terrified by their noise, cried aloud in the name of the Lord,

'Sinners, turn! why will you die?
God, your Maker, asks you why?'

They subsided apace; and more and more began to sink into seriousness. Some Gentlemen (I am sorry to say it) laboured exceedingly to prevent this. And one particularly in light grey clothes, went to and fro with great diligence, and gave money to, I believe, 20 or 30 persons, to shout, and strike, or push their neighbours. Much tumult arose. In the intervals of calm I cried the more earnestly, 'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' After almost an hour (the time I at first proposed) I withdrew, walking thro' the thickest of the Rioters, who dropt away to the right and left, and could no more bear my eye, than they could *His* that sent me.

"Now, Sir, what an insult it is upon common sense, to say,

I raised that Tumult! Had only these Gentlemen, so called, stood quietly, I would have answered for the behaviour of the rest, who within one quarter of an hour, would have been as orderly and silent as an assembly in a Court of Justice. However that be, I have now delivered my own soul, and if these poor sheep do continue in sin, and consequently perish, I am clear; I have done what in me lay: Their blood is not on my head.

“ I am persuaded, Sir, you do not take the freedom with which I have spoken, as a mark of disrespect; but rather as a proof, that I am, Sir,

“ Your most obedient Servant,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

In connection with the beginnings of Methodism in the North, a brief notice of its Statistics may not be unacceptable to its friends.

In 1749 there were only *twenty-two Circuits* in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

In 1835, exclusive of Missions, foreign and domestic, and also of Ireland, which has now 11 Districts and 44 Circuits, there were 33 *Districts*, and 379 *Circuits*.

In 1749, the *Newcastle Circuit* embraced the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, part of Durham, and run a long way into Scotland; in 1835, it was only about 9 *miles* from *east* to *west*, and 6 or 7 from *north* to *south*; from 16 to 18 Circuits having been formed out of what was previously called “*a round*.”

In 1765, when first the *names* of the *preachers* were given, there were 72 *preachers*, the Circuits having multiplied to 39.

In 1766, when the *numbers* in Society were first given to the public, Newcastle Circuit stood 1804, the highest number of any in the three kingdoms. Lancashire, which was the next, stood 1742.

In 1835, the numbers yielded by the same ground which the Newcastle Circuit formerly occupied, were 17,608, employing about 41 *travelling preachers*, instead of 4, as in 1766.

In 1766, there were only 11 chapels in Northumberland, Westmorland, Cumberland, Durham, and that part of Scotland belonging to the Newcastle Circuit; viz. the Orphan House, begun in 1742; Kinley, in 1752; Gateshead Fell in 1754; North Shields, Whitehaven, Teesdale, and High Street, Sunderland, in 1759; Westgate, in 1763; Barnard Castle (possibly in the Dales Circuit) in 1764; Monkwearmouth and Alston, in 1766.

In 1812, there were, including the above 11 chapels, at least 62 on the same ground; and if calculations are brought down to 1835, we shall be within compass, if we say 130.—On the Banks of the Tyne alone, within a line of from 20 to 30 miles up the *river*, there are no less than 31 Methodist Chapels, exclusive of those belonging to slips from the Body—16 on one side of the river and 15 on the other—not one chapel being more than two miles from another, either on one side of the river or the other—and not a chapel a half a mile from the Tyne itself: thus studding the banks from Hexham to Shields.

Note C; LIST OF SUFFERERS AND SURVIVORS.

(SEE PAGE 139.)

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.			WIDOW AND CHILDREN:
62	Thos. Simpson	overman	..	..	widow 12
63	Jos. Lawson	deputy-overman	..	..	widow 10
56	Willm. Crister	deputy-overman	}	father and	widow 6
17	W. Crister, jun.	crane-man		son	.. —
35	John Robson	deputy-overman	}	father and	widow 5
12	And. Robson	trapper ..		son	.. —
12	Matt. Usher	trapper	..	..	.. —
16	Peter Green	stone-stower	..	..	.. —
19	Luke Mason	putter ..	}	brothers	.. —
17	Peter Mason	putter —
15	Wm. Mason	putter —
13	Robert Mason	trapper —
20	James Miller	putter ..	..	..	.. —
33	Martin Brown	hewer ..	}	brothers	widow 3
21	Robert Clark	putter ..		in-law.	.. —
17	Wm. Dinning	putter ..	}	brothers	.. —
12	Bate. Dinning	putter —
67	Christ. Oving-	door-keeper	}	father and	widow 5
	ton, sen.			son	.. —
19	Christ. Oving-	putter ..	}		.. —
	ton, jun.				
20	John Stanness	putter ..	..	..	.. —
12	John Reavley	trapper ..	..	..	.. —
22	Edw. Combey	putter ..	}	brothers	.. —
20	Robt. Combey	putter —
11	James Combey	trapper —

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.			WIDOW AND CHILDREN.	
22	Francis Bell	crane-man	} brothers	{	..	—
19	Richard Bell	putter ..			..	—
16	William Bell	rolley-driver			..	—
13	Robert Bell	rolley-driver			..	—
20	John Gillis	putter ..	..	..	mother	3
8	Robert Roseby	trapper ..	..	..	..	—
15	John Lowry	attending Davy lamps	..	..	..	—
43	Cuth. Reavley	hewer ..	} father and sons	{	widow	7
20	John Reavley	putter ..			..	—
16	Thos. Reavley	helper up ..	..	..	..	—
12	John Hepple	trapper ..	..	..	..	—
15	John Roseby	putter ...	} brothers	{	..	—
10	Joseph Roseby	putter ..			..	—
15	Joseph Roseby	rolley-driver	} brothers, cousins of the above	{	..	—
13	Christ. Roseby	rolley-driver			..	—
21	Henry Giles	putter ..	} brothers	{	..	—
19	John Giles	putter ..			..	—
16	Andrew Giles	rolley-driver			..	—
12	Edw. Combey	rolley-driver	..	..	..	—
19	John Buddle	putter ..	} brothers	{	..	—
17	Mich. Buddle	putter ..			..	—
14	Matt. Buddle	putter ..			..	—
17	Henry Appleby	putter ..	} brothers	{	..	—
11	Jas. Appleby*	trapper ..			..	—
72	Jos. Harbottle	trapper ..	..	..	widow	—
13	Thomas Swan	rolley-driver	..	..	..	—
15	R. Pendlington	rolley-driver	..	..	mother	5
14	Thos. Ellerton	attending Davy lamps	..	..	mother	3
19	John English	putter ..	..	..	..	—
19	Roger Sharp	putter ..	..	..	..	—

* This is the boy who, having finished his own work, bargained with another boy, who was anxious to visit the race course, to remain at work for him, as noticed p. 149.

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.				WIDOW AND CHILDREN.	
18	Hutton Raite	putter	..	}	brothers	..	—
13	Christ. Raite	putter	..			mother	3
53	W. Thompson	sinker	..	}	father and son	widow	8
13	Jas. Thompson	driver	..			..	—
14	J. Thompson	rolley-driver			.. ..	..	—
16	Geo. Kennedy	rolley-driver			.. ..	..	—
23	John Croser	hewer	..		.. ..	widow	2
12	Thomas Mason	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
19	James Green	crane-man	..		.. ..	..	—
34	Thos. Reavley	hewer	..	}	father and son	widow	5
11	John Reavley	trapper	..			..	—
14	Thomas Moore	helper up		}	brothers	..	—
12	James Moore	way cleaner				..	—
21	Joseph Wright	putter	..		.. ..	..	—
19	John Chicken	putter	..		.. ..	mother	4
16	John Soulsby	way cleaner		}	brothers	..	—
14	Geo. Soulsby	trapper	..			..	—
47	Wm. Johnson	sinker	..		.. ..	widow	2
19	James Giles	putter	..		.. ..	..	—
18	Edwd. McNay	putter	..		.. ..	..	—
75	Ralph Waggott	trapper	..		.. ..	widow	10
31	Matt. Soulsby	onsetter	..		.. ..	widow	3
9	George Kyle	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
21	John Waggott	putter	..		.. ..	mother	3
18	John Hall	putter	..	}	brothers	..	—
11	George Hall	putter	..			..	—
10	Joseph Wanlas	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
24	William Reay	hewer	..	}	brothers	mother	1
28	Andrew Reay	hewer	..			widow	3
11	Thos. Huggup	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
19	David Collins	putter	..		.. ..	mother	2
15	Luke Watson	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
14	Francis Haxon	trapper	..		.. ..	..	—
20	James Cousin	putter	..		.. ..	..	—

AGE.	NAME.	HOW EMPLOYED.				WIDOW AND CHILDREN.	
16	George Miller	putter	..	}	brothers	{	.. —
12	John Miller	trapper	..				.. —
19	Thos. Sharp	putter	..	..	..	{	mother
19	Edward Bell	helper up	..	..	..		.. —
16	Ralph Waggett	driver	..	}	brothers	{	.. —
14	J. C. Waggett	driver	..				.. —
17	Wm. Patrick	trapper	..	}	brothers	{	.. —
15	David Patrick	trapper	..				.. —
21	R. Wilkinson	trapper	..	}	brothers	{	.. —
17	W. Wilkinson	rolley-driver	..				.. —
13	Robt. Dawson	trapper	..	..	..	:	—
15	Perciyl Reed*	way cleaner	}	}	brothers	{	.. —
13	John Reed*	way cleaner					.. —

* John Reed, the father of the above boys, was one of the four got out of the mine alive, and who, as noticed pp. 148 and 176, had his leg amputated.

Note D ; ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES.

(PAGE 142.)

[THE following Table and Extracts are to be found in an Appendix, by Sykes, to "The Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to take into Consideration the State of the Coal Trade in the United Kingdom," &c.]

"EXPLOSIONS and other Casualties," says he, "happened as frequently in our Collieries formerly as at the present time; but the servility of the local press prevented their being given to the public. The following extract from the Newcastle Journal of March 21st, 1767, will prove this assertion:—'As so many deplorable accidents have lately happened in Collieries, it certainly claims the attention of Coal-owners to make a provision for the distressed widows and fatherless children occasioned by these Mines, as the catastrophe from foul-air becomes more common than ever; yet, as we have been requested to take no particular notice of these things, which in fact could have very little good tendency, we drop the farther mentioning of it; but before we dismiss the subject, as a laudable example for their imitation, we recommend the provision made in the Trinity House for distressed seamen, seamen's widows, &c., which in every respect is praise-worthy, and confers honour on that brotherhood.' From this it is reasonable to conclude, that there must, at that time, have been a *dreadful sweep of human life* in one or more of the neighbouring Collieries; and it is from such injunctions laid upon the newspaper editors, that these occurrences for a great

number of years were kept as much as possible from the public ;* however, I shall give a more complete list than any hitherto published :—

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1658 May.	Gallow Flat,† near Elswick	inundated	number unknown
About 1710.	Bensham‡	.. exploded	70 to 80
1743 Jan. 18.	North Biddick	.. ditto	.. 17
1756 Aug. 11.	Chaytor's Haugh	ditto	.. 4
1757 June 10.	Ravensworth	.. ditto	.. 16
1760 June 15.	Long Benton	.. ditto	.. 1
1761 Dec. 1.	Hartley	.. ditto	.. 5
1765 April 2.	Walker	.. ditto	.. 8
1766 March 18.	Ditto	.. ditto	.. 10
— April 16.	South Biddick	.. ditto	several
— Aug. 22.	Lambton	.. ditto	.. 6
1767 March 27.	Fatfield	.. ditto	.. 39
1773 Dec. 6.	A Colliery near the Wear	ditto	several
1776 Oct. 7.	Ovington's Pit,|| E. Rainton	ditto	..

* It is not many years since coroner's inquests were first held on the bodies of the unfortunate sufferers by these visitations, consequently "the ready coffin and the church yard closed the scene."

† "April 24th, 1695, were buried, James Archer and his son Stephen, who, in the month of May, 1658, were drowned in a coal pitt in the Gallow Flat, by the breaking in of water from an old waste. The bodys were found intire after they had lyen in the water 36 years and 11 months."—ST. ANDREW'S REGISTER.

‡ This was the first attempt made to work the low main seam in the neighbourhood of Newcastle.

|| This explosion happened as follows.—Michael Smurthwaite having made preparation for a blast in the stone, working downwards or sinking, fastened a rope, called the centre line, in the hole, for the purpose of running a hot iron ring from the top of the pit to a train of gunpowder, and being drawn up from the bottom so as to be considered safe, the ring was run down the line by the other man, William Wilson, which caused the explosion, and they were both lost. Wilson had gone to work that day for another man whose turn it was.

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1778 Dec. 8.	Dolly Pit, Chaytor's Haugh	exploded	24
1780 Aug. 21.	Birtley North Side	ditto ..	3
1782 May 17.	The Fauld Pit,* Gateshead	ditto ..	4
— Oct. 11.	Wallsend† ..	ditto ..	1
1783 May.	Washington ..	ditto ..	2
These occurred between the Years 1783 & 1794.	Ditto ..	ditto ..	2
	Ditto ..	ditto ..	2
	Lambton's A Pit, Brn. Moor	ditto ..	1
	Ditto B Pit, ditto	ditto several	
	Do. Lady Ann Pit, Moreton	ditto ..	2
1784 Nov. 6.	Wallsend } ‡ ..	ditto ..	3
— Dec. 12.	Ditto } ‡ ..	ditto ..	2
1785 June 9.	Ditto|| ..	ditto ..	1

* These unfortunate men were all that were down the pit at the time of the explosion. Three of the bodies were got, the other STILL REMAINS IN THE MINE. The coals worked here were called the Hopewell. The colliery was on the east side of the High Street of Gateshead, in what is called the High Ward.

† The coal set on fire, and the colliery drowned up to extinguish it.

‡ These explosions were supposed to have taken place at the spark of the steel mill, by the light of which the people were working in the shaft. The bodies were not recovered for several months.

In repairing the shaft after these explosions, the mode of throwing the rays of the sun down a shaft by a mirror, so as to light it, was accidentally discovered in the following manner :—While the people were working in the shaft, at about 80 fathoms from the surface, a carpenter was employed to do something at the head framing immediately above the mouth of the shaft, and in using his saw he turned the bright blade of it accidentally so as to throw a pencil of the sun's rays suddenly down the pit, to the great terror of the workmen below, who thought the pit had fired again. The cause of their alarm being, however, soon discovered, it suggested the idea of applying a mirror to throw the light of the sun down the shaft, which mode of lighting has since been frequently resorted to when other lights could not be used.

|| This was the first explosion which was distinctly known to have taken place at the steel mill. Some doubt remained up to this time as to whether the fire-damp would explode at the spark of the steel mill or not; but the fact was clearly ascertained on this occasion, as the person, John Selkirk, who was "playing" the mill at the time, survived the accident.

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1785 Dec. 4.	Wallsend ..	exploded	.. 2
1786 April 9.	Ditto ..	ditto	.. 6
1790 Oct. 4.	Ditto ..	ditto	.. 7
1793 Dec. 27.	Hope Pit, Sheriff Hill	ditto	.. 14
1794 June 9.	Rickleton Pit, near Picktree	ditto	.. 30
— June 11.	Harraton ..	ditto	.. 28
— Nov.	Glebe Pit, Oxclose	ditto	.. 2
— Dec. 21.	Hope Pit, Sheriff Hill	ditto	several
1795 April 24.	Paradise, or W. Pit, Benwell	ditto	.. 11
1796 Feb. 12.	New Washington	ditto	.. 7
— April.	B Pit, Washington	ditto	.. 2
— Sept. 8.	Slatyford ..	inundated	.. 6
1798 Feb. 27.	B Pit, Washington	exploded	.. 7
— May 22.	Glebe Pit, Oxclose	ditto	.. 4
1799	Jane Pit, Newbottle	ditto	.. 1
— Aug. 13.	A Pit, Oxclose ..	ditto	.. 1
— Oct. 11.	Lumley ..	ditto	.. 39

(The bodies of these unfortunate sufferers were
never found.)

1803	Moreton Pit, Lambton	exploded	.. 2
— Sept. 25.	Wallsend ..	ditto	.. 13
1805 April.	A Pit, Oxclose ..	ditto	.. 2
— Oct. 21	Hebburn ..	ditto	.. 35
— Nov. 29.	Oxclose ..	ditto	.. 38
1806 March 28.	Killingworth ..	ditto	.. 10
1808	New Pit, Shiney Row	ditto	.. 2
— Aug. 31.	Hall Pit, Fatfield	ditto	.. 3
— Nov. 29.	Harraton* ..	ditto	.. 4

* The coal was set on fire by this explosion, and the pits were tightly scaffolded to exclude the air, for the purpose of smothering out the fire. The pits were opened out at the end of two months, when the fire on the coal was found to be extinguished; but to the astonishment of every body, a pony was found to be alive and in high condition. This pony had a trick of slipping his halter, and wandering about the workings. The explosion happened just after the pit had finished its day's work,

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1808 Nov. 30.	Hall Pit, Fatfield	exploded	.. 3
	Colling's Pit, Rainton	ditto	.. 2
	B Pit, Oxclose ..	ditto	.. 1
	Houghton Gate Pit, Lambton	ditto	.. 2
(The last three I have no dates for.)			
1809 Sept. 14.	Killingworth ..	ditto	.. 12
1812 May 25.	Felling ..	ditto	.. 92
— Oct. 10.	Herrington Mill Pit, Pensher	ditto	.. 24
1813 July 17.	Collingwood Main	ditto	.. 8
— Sept. 28.	Hall Pit, Fatfield	ditto	.. 32
— Dec. 24.	Felling ..	ditto	.. 22
1814 April 5.	Howdon Pit, Percy Main	ditto	.. 4
— Aug. 12.	Hebburn ..	ditto	.. 11
— Sept. 9.	Leafield ..	ditto	.. 4
1815 May 3.	Heaton Main ..	inundated	.. 75
— June 2.	Success Pit, Newbottle	exploded	.. 57
— June 27.	Sheriff Hill ..	ditto	.. 11
— July 31.	Newbottle	{ Bursting of the Boiler of a high-pressure Lo- comotive Engine }	18
— Dec. 11.	Sheriff Hill	shaft brattice firing	5
— Dec. 18.	Townley ..	exploded	.. 1
1817 June 30.	Row Pit,* Harraton	ditto	.. 38

and the horses, 22 in number, had been tied up in the stables. It is supposed that this pony had slipped his halter, and gone upon his ramble as usual, as all the remaining 21 horses were killed in the stables by the explosion. It would seem that the life of this pony had been preserved by the fresh air which was pent up in the rise part of the workings, and he had lived upon the forage of his dead companions. He survived the accident many years.

* This is the explosion alluded to by Mr. Buddle, at page 49, folio, and page 10, octavo, editions of the Report of the Evidence taken in 1829, on the state of the coal trade of the United Kingdom. "It was occasioned entirely by the perverse obstinacy of a young man named John Moody, one of the hewers, who, in defiance of the orders of the overman, refused to use Sir H. Davy's lamp, and lighted a candle, which was

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1817 July 2.	Nova Scotia, Harraton	after-damp ..	8
— July 21.	Sheriff Hill ..	exploded ..	1
— Sept. 25.	Jarrow ..	ditto ..	6
— Nov. 3.	Ouston ..	ditto ..	1
— Dec. 18.	Plain Pit, Rainton	ditto ..	27
1818 Aug. 5.	Wallsend* ..	ditto ..	4
1819 July 19.	Sheriff Hill ..	ditto ..	35
— Oct. 9.	George Pit, Lambton	ditto ..	13
1820 April 28.	Jarrow ..	ditto ..	2
— Oct 1.	Backworth ..	after-damp ..	1
1821 July 9.	Rainton North Pit	exploded ..	1
— ———	Coxlodge ..	ditto ..	1
— Oct. 19.	Nesham's Newbottle	ditto ..	6
— Oct. 23.	Wallsend (Russell's)	ditto ..	52
— ———	Felling ..	ditto ..	6
1823 Feb. 21.	Ouston ..	ditto ..	4
— June 19.	Walker ..	falling in of earth	6
— Nov. 3.	Plain Pit Rainton	exploded ..	59
1824 Nov. 19.	Dolly Pit, Newbottle	ditto ..	11
— Oct. 25.	George Pit, Lumley	ditto ..	14

twice put out by the workmen whom he was to relieve; but he relighted it by unscrewing the lamp, and thus sacrificed his own life and the life of his companions. Two days after, eight men who went down the Nova Scotia pit of the same colliery were killed by the after-damp which had entered the workings, supposed from the Row pit, subsequent to the explosion'.—See *Syke's Local Records*, second edition, vol. 2, page 105.

* This is the only explosion that has been known to have happened at the Davy Lamp. It occurred as follows:—Two men and boys were working in a certain part of the mine in an explosive mixture. One of the men extinguished his DAVY in trimming it, and sent one of the boys to the "stationary" light in the safe part of the mine to get it relighted. The boy returning with it in haste, fell when near to the man to whom he was carrying it, and falling with the lamp upon the corner of a cast-iron tram-plate, burst a hole in the wire gauze cylinder of the lamp, and the explosion instantly took place. The man survived a few hours, and

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1825 July 3.	Judeth Pit, Fatfield	exploded ..	11
— Oct. 5.	Hebburn ..	ditto ..	4
1826 Jan. 17.	Jarrow ..	ditto ..	34
— May 30.	Townley ..	ditto ..	38
— Sept. 5.	Heworth ..	ditto ..	5
— Oct. 27.	Benwell ..	ditto ..	2
1827 July 20.	Charles Pit, Lumley	ditto ..	1
— Sept. 5.	Fawdon ..	ditto ..	2
1828 March 15.	Jarrow ..	ditto ..	8
— Sept. 1.	New Pit, Houghton-le-Spring	ditto ..	7
— Nov. 20.	I Pit, Washington	ditto ..	14
— Dec. 1.	Townley ..	inundated ..	1
1829 May 13.	Killingworth West Moor	exploded ..	1
— June 26.	Dorothea Pit, Newbottle	ditto ..	1
— Dec. 3.	Willington ..	ditto ..	4
1830 August 3.	Jarrow ..	ditto ..	42
— Nov. 27.	Hebburn ..	suffocation ..	2
1831 July 9.	King Pit, Wreckenton	exploded ..	3
— Sept. 20.	Willington ..	ditto ..	7
1832 March 7.	Beamish ..	inundated ..	2
— June 15.	Newbottle ..	boiler exploded	12
— Oct.	Wallsend ..	exploded ..	1
— Nov. 10.	New Pit, Gosforth*	falling down the shaft	2
— Nov. 13.	Heaton ..	exploded ..	1
1833 May 9.	Springwell ..	ditto ..	47
— May 24.	Great Lumley ..	ditto ..	2

told the writer of this note the circumstance, who took up the Davy on the spot where the boy was killed, and found it in the state described.

* These two men were ascending the pit in the usual way, but by some means the engine drew them up to the pulley over the shaft, from which they fell, one directly down the shaft, and the other, after alighting near the mouth of the pit, fell in also, by which both were literally dashed in pieces.

Oct. 15, 1835.—The shaft metal tubbing of Houghton Pit, belonging to Lord Durham, gave way, from which gushed out an immense stream of

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1833 August 2.	Fatfield*	.. fall of stone ..	1
— Nov. 8.	Blackfell	.. exploded ..	3
— Nov. 26.	Wideopen†	.. boiler bursting	1
1834 Feb. 25.	Fanny Pit, Gosforth‡	corf unhooking	4
— March 28.	Budle Pit, Pittington||	corf blown down shaft	2
— Sept. 17.	Elemore Pit, Hetton§	boiler bursting	1
— Oct. 4.	Springwell¶	timber falling down the shaft	2
— Nov. 24.	Hartley**	breaking of the shaft rope	4

water, so as to fill the workings of the pit. All the horses that were down the pit at the time were drowned, but no human life was lost.

* Mr. John Robinson, overman, whilst traversing the workings, a large piece of stone, supposed to weigh about twenty tons, fell upon him. When the stone was removed, his body presented a shocking spectacle. A man who was with him just before the accident, had stepped back a few paces, having forgot something, and thus saved his life. Robinson left a widow and five children.

† This man's name was John Gibson; he was engine man, and was killed by the bursting of one of the boilers of the main pumping engine.

Nov. 29, 1833.—An explosion of fire-damp took place at Low Moorsley Pit, near Houghton-le-Spring, by which Mr. Appleby, viewer, Mr. Dawson, overman, and four men, were dreadfully burnt, but hopes were entertained of their recovery.

‡ These four youths were killed by the corf in which they were ascending slipping off the hook. Their names were John Forster, James Rayne, John Gilchrist, and Thomas Lumsden.

|| An empty corf having been left near the mouth of the shaft, was caught by the wind and hurled down the shaft at the time five men were ascending, two of whom, Mathew Wall and Edward Wilson, were killed, the rest severely injured.

§ This man's name was George Bell. Several others were dreadfully injured.

¶ By the fall of a heavy piece of timber down the shaft, a scaffolding or "cradle," on which were standing, in the act of repairing the shaft, William Punsheon, brakesman, and John Smith, wasteman, was carried to the bottom, a depth of thirty fathoms, and both were killed upon the spot.

** Three men and a boy were killed by the breaking of the rope in descending the shaft. They left three widows and ten children. The names of the men were Thomas Martin, William Witty, and John Bar-rick.

TIME WHEN.	COLLIERIES.	CAUSES.	LIVES LOST.
1834 Nov. 24.	St. Lawrence ..	exploded ..	3
1835 May 1.	Whitley* ..	corf improperly hooked	6
— June 18.	Wallsend ..	exploded ..	103
— June 30.	Backworth ..	fall of stone ..	2
1837 Dec. 6.	Springwell ..	exploded ..	27

“Many of these catastrophes were truly heart-rending, as in some instances the poor fellows’ bodies were blown up the shaft with the velocity of a cannon ball, and their limbs scattered over the adjacent grounds. On the first report of an explosion, the wives and children of the workmen, who almost invariably dwell contiguous to the colliery, run to the shaft with shrieks and howlings indescribable. The Rev. Mr. Hodgson, in his excellent account of the dreadful explosion which took place in the Felling Colliery on the 25th of May, 1812,† says ‘The subterraneous fire broke forth with two heavy discharges from the John Pit, which were, almost instantaneously, followed by one from the William Pit. A slight trembling, as from an earthquake, was felt for about half a mile around the workings ; and the noise of the explosion, though dull, was heard to three or four miles distance, and much resembled an unsteady fire of infantry. Immense quantities of dust and small coal accompanied these blasts, and rose high into the air, in the form of an inverted cone. The heaviest part of the ejected matter, such as corves, pieces of wood, and small coal, fell near the pits ; but the dust, borne away by a strong west wind, fell in a continued shower from the pit to the distance of a mile and a half. In the village of Heworth, it caused a darkness like that of early twilight, and covered the roads so thickly, that the footsteps of passengers were strongly imprinted

* A man named Robinson, and five boys, were killed by the hook not being properly placed in the bow of the corf.

† This was probably the first circumstantial account of a coal mine explosion that had ever been given to the public.

in it. The heads of both the shaft-frames were blown off, their sides set on fire, and their pullies shattered in pieces; but the pullies of the John Pit gin, being on a crane not within the influence of the blast, were fortunately preserved. The coal dust, ejected from the William Pit into the drift or horizontal part of the tube, was about three inches thick, and some burnt to a light cinder. Pieces of burning coal, driven off the solid stratum of the mine, were also blown up this shaft. As soon as the explosion was heard, the wives and children of the workmen ran to the working-pit. Wildness and terror were pictured in every countenance. The crowd from all sides soon collected to the number of several hundreds; some crying out for a husband, others for a parent or a son, and all deeply affected with an admixture of horror, anxiety, and grief.' The following is the same gentleman's description of the formation and effects of one of these blasts:—'When the air has proceeded lazily for several days through a colliery, and an extensive magazine of fire-damp is ignited in the wastes, then the whole mine is instantly illuminated with the most brilliant lightning; the expanded fluid drives before it a roaring whirlwind of flaming air, which tears up every thing in its progress, scorching some of the miners to a cinder, burying others under enormous heaps of ruins shaken from the roof, and, thundering to the shafts, wastes its volcanic fury in a discharge of thick clouds of coal-dust, stones, timber, and not unfrequently limbs of men and horses.'

It is the opinion of an eminent Colliery Viewer of the present day, that "the loss of lives by other accidents in Coal Mines exceeds, on an average of years, the number lost by explosion."

THE END.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

Printed by Brown and Green, Royal Arcade.

